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Michael White on the Tory funding crisis

John Major's money-go-round



G2 with European weather

A parents' guide to sex education

What shall we tell the children?



G2 pages 12/13

Society

Sex and the flower show

G2 pages 10/11

Tough non co-operation policy threatens to paralyse Europe in worst crisis for 23 years □ Sceptics hail PM's strategy over beef ban

Major goes to war with Europe

'Breach of faith' goads Cabinet into reprisals

Patrick Wintour

JOHN MAJOR provoked the biggest crisis in Anglo-European relations since Britain joined the European Union in 1973 by declaring yesterday a policy of non-co-operation with her partners in retaliation at their refusal to lift the ban on British beef exports.

An angry John Major accused unnamed partners, known to include the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, of a breach of faith and a wilful disregard of Britain's interests.

With immediate effect, the new policy — agreed yesterday with the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, and the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke — means Britain will first use its veto to block the passage of all EU directives requiring unanimity.

Britain will also adopt a policy of non co-operation at meetings of the Inter-Governmental Conference. If no solution is found by the start of the next EU Heads of Government summit in Florence on June 21 and 22, Mr Major vowed to disrupt its proceedings and refuse to sign any communiqué at Florence, so turning it into a legal nullity.

The policy takes Mr Major to the brink of breaking both EU and British law, but the strategy has been pitched to prevent Britain being exposed to counter legal action.

The Prime Minister rounded on his European partners, especially Spain, Germany and Austria, saying: "A balanced approach to the best scientific advice had been ignored by a number of member states, in some cases despite prior assurances of support. I must tell the House that I regard such action as a wilful disregard of Britain's interests and in some cases a breach of faith."

There was no scientific case for continuing the ban, he said. Legal proceedings to lift all the bans would begin this week. "These legal steps are not sufficient to have in all the House that without progress towards lifting the ban, we cannot be expected to continue to co-operate normally on other community business. I say this with great reluctance, but the EU operates through goodwill. If we do not benefit from goodwill from partners, clearly we cannot reciprocate."

"We cannot continue business as usual within Europe when we are faced with this clear disregard by some of our partners of reason, common sense and Britain's national interests."

Delighted Tory Euro-sceptics claimed that Mr Major had achieved a massive inter-

national political victory against the party's pro-European wing, so casting the die for a fiercely patriotic Conservative re-election strategy.

Privately, the sceptics were forecasting that Mr Major would be forced to take further measures soon.

In the Commons, Tory MPs taunted Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, with one Euro-sceptic, Sir Peter Tapsell, claiming they had shown themselves incapable of speaking for Britain. The chairman of the backbench 1922 Committee, Sir Marcus Fox, said: "Enough is enough. If they don't get the message, the European Union is not going to be the same ever again."

Mr Major's drastic plans to paralyse Europe follows British ministers' exasperation at the repeated refusal of EU countries to take even limited steps to lift the seven-week ban on British beef products.

The policy of attrition, agreed in outline by the Cabinet last week, was sanctioned in detail with the pro-European Mr Clarke and the chief whip, Alistair Goodlad, yesterday morning. Mr Rifkind, who had already canvassed Cabinet Ministers for retaliatory options, gave his endorsement yesterday afternoon.

Friends of Mr Clarke insisted the Chancellor had not been forced into accepting the retaliatory package, but was a genuine if reluctant convert. The move provoked a furious response in Paris and Bonn, where ministers said they would not be blackmailed.

The commission, desperate to defuse potentially its worst crisis since the De Gaulle empty chair policy of 1965, was immediately set on a round of meetings to see if agriculture ministers could find a solution.

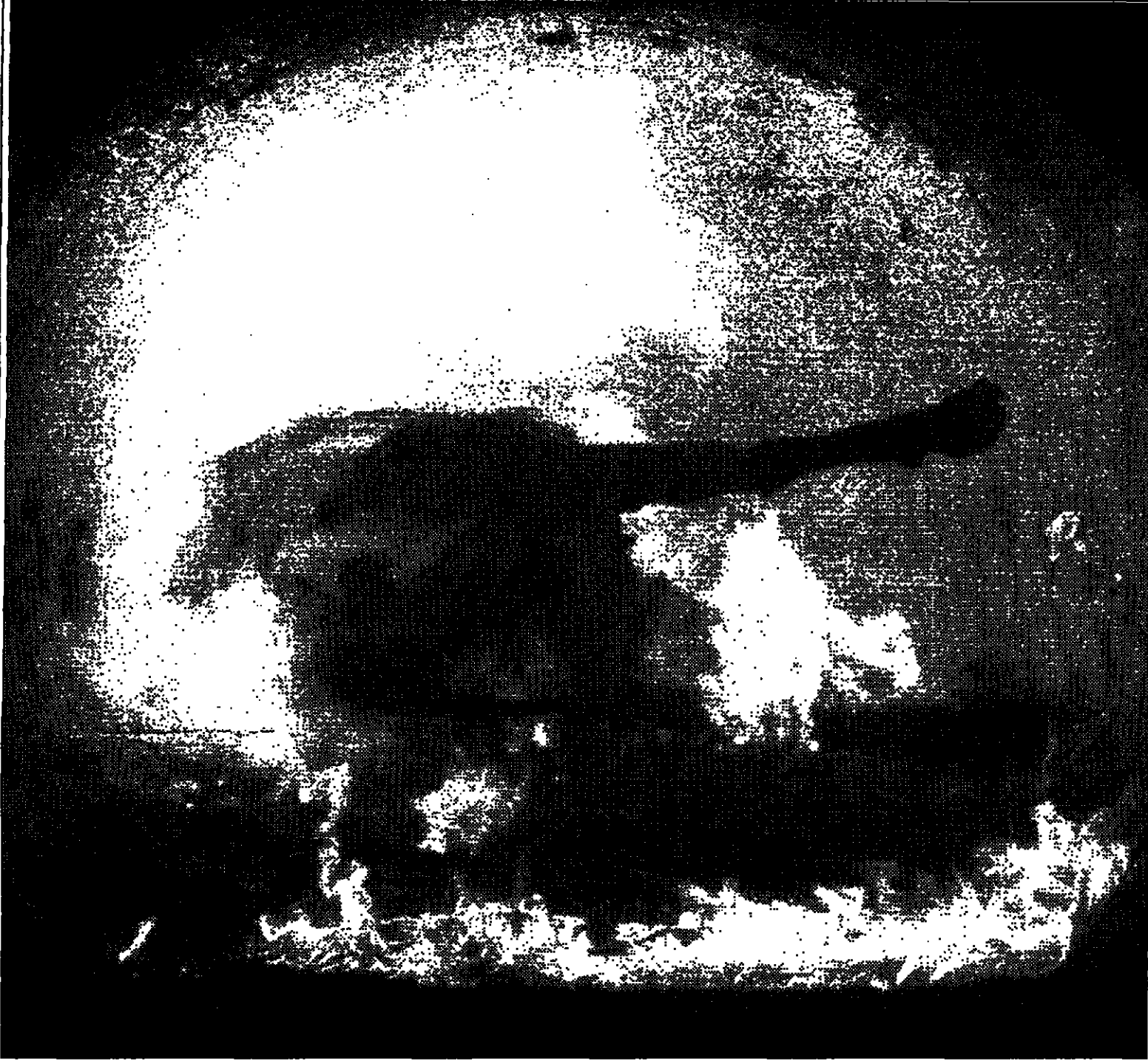
A cautious Tony Blair counselled that Mr Major might be making a serious position worse, adding: "The language at the moment is strong but there is an absence of particulars as to exactly what you mean."

Labour privately see the non co-operation statement as a piece of patriotic bluster that affects only three directives and will be lifted once the EU lifts the ban on beef derivatives.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, claimed: "Most people will conclude that the Euro-sceptic minority on your backbenches have now taken control of the Government's foreign policy, and that this has much more to do with appeasing than with restoring confidence in the beef market."

Officials in Brussels were incredulous at the British insensitivity, pointing out that other governments usually approach the Commission privately with potential problems and secure a rescue package or crisis management deal well before any word of crisis leaks out publicly. It is what the Germans and Danes did over swine fever, and France, too, has generally squared agricultural relations in Brussels in advance. The British government with its instinctive scepticism did not try it.

Within days, the drawbacks of the Hogg approach became clear, as European countries rapidly imposed their own



In the abattoirs of Britain beef incineration continues as Major falls out with Europe

PHOTOGRAPH: NIGEL DICKENSON

Mr Hogg's blundering progress

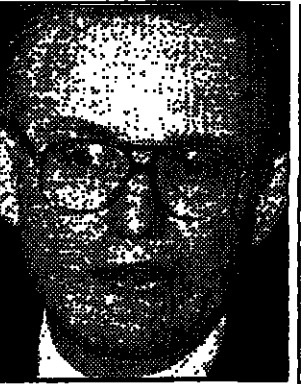
Stephen Bates in Brussels

DOUGLAS Hogg could not have got off to a worse start when he was sent to present Britain's case in the beef crisis to Europe. The European Commission knew nothing of the issue which would isolate Britain until 90 minutes before it broke on March 20.

Mr Hogg told Franz Fischler, the Austrian agriculture commissioner, who has largely sided with the British case, that protocol demanded the Commons be told first. It put relations on to a bad footing and annoyed a potential ally: the Commission is the source of compensation funding and compromise dealing.

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Douglas Hogg: Undiplomatic, unconvincing

bans on British beef, followed closely by the rest of the world.

The Commission found itself dragged into endorsing the bans in the absence of any formal approaches from Britain, which even rejected a request to send its chief veterinary officer to the first crisis meeting of experts in Brussels.

The Government headed off an immediate, open-ended ban on all beef products only through smart footwork by the two British European Commissioners, Sir Leon Brittan and Neil Kinnock, but Mr Hogg then immediately put up a disastrous performance at an emergency meeting of agriculture ministers in Luxembourg. They were appalled at what

they took to be an arrogant and blustering approach by the minister, who shouted and put forward no detailed plans for eradicating BSE from British herds. Britain was isolated 14 to one and Mr Hogg left Luxembourg with no promise of a date for ending the ban and no firm figures on compensation — the two things he had demanded.

Fellow ministers were astounded by his performance. "Your minister — is he thought much of a politician in Britain? He does not seem to be very good at diplomacy," said one incandescent Scandinavian diplomat.

Despite Mr Hogg having been told he must come up with a detailed plan of action by the end of April, commission officials said Britain made only the most desultory approaches to them in the four weeks between meetings. Mr Hogg tried a different tactic: charm. It had an unwelcome effect on French diplomats: "What can this mean? He has been smiling at us for the last two days," said one.

It did not work. Mr Hogg announced in advance that he would be expecting a date for lifting the ban and that proposals for a limited cull of up to 42,000 cattle from herds in which BSE had been detected would be implemented only if that was forthcoming. It was not and the minister was Turn to page 3, column 1

Thoughts of a farms minister

Bluster: "British beef can be eaten with confidence."

Douglas Hogg, March 23

The ban stays: "We came a long way in two days."

April 3

Mass slaughter? "The government has no intention of adopting any such measure."

April 16

Watch out, Europe: "There was no talk of retaliation."

April 23

42,000 cattle to die, but the ban stays: "We have broken through by a combination of science, logic and tough talking."

April 30

Bluster: "The essential question to ask is, 'Is British beef safe?' and the answer is 'yes.'"

May 1

Cull doubled, but the ban stays: "Good progress has been made today."

May 15

The ban stays: "It was very disappointing for the British government, for the commission, and also in relation to Europe..."

Advertisement for 'Enigma' by Robert Harris. Includes text: 'Genius goes to war', 'The Times', 'Enigma totally gripped me', 'ROY JENKINS, Sunday Times', 'ROBERT HARRIS ENIGMA', 'from the bestselling author of Fatherland', 'THE ONLY PUZZLE IS WHY YOU HAVEN'T READ IT YET', 'Out Now in Paperback', '9 770261 307330'.

Inside Britain... 3

World News... 7

Finance... 11

Sport... 16

Comment and Letters 8, Obituaries 10, Crossword 15, Weather 16, Radio and TV 16

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Sketch

Don't panic! Major drills dad's army



Simon Hoggart

IT WAS the day war broke out. The Prime Minister's voice crackled over the microphone. "No such undertaking has been received, and consequently this country is at war with Germany, and all the other lot too."

The moment he sat down (having uttered slightly different but similar words to Neville Chamberlain) we expected strong warning of the first air raid, as a lone Messerschmitt was spotted wheeling through the summer skies above Lowestoft.

Like so many of John Major's statements this one hovered between solemnity and farce. His declaration of war on the EU was more effective because of Mr Major's pedantic, old-fashioned diction.

Even the happy baying of his back-benchers — "yurr yurr", "yah! yah!" and "hrrrrrruh" — sounded wonderfully elderly, as if uttered by men who still wore morning suits to the Commons.

"I have to tell the House that I regard such action as willful disregard of Britain's interests... I have to tell the House that without progress towards lifting the ban, we cannot be expected to continue to co-operate on other Community business," he declared.

The old men growled behind him. Some of them must have been listening to the wireless in 1939. Did they hear the echo of "I have to tell you no such undertaking has been received"?

He sat down to the loudest cheer he has heard for months. Tony Blair did less well. It wasn't his fault. Labour has predicted for

years that our slack approach to BSE would bring disaster. But in these dark days when the nation — or at least the Tory party — is united in the face of the enemy, being right is not enough. He went on too long and was jeered.

Mr Major switched from March of History mode back to Mr Peewee. The Labour leader had not expressed a single view of how to handle the matter, he whinged, though this was somewhat unfair, since there's a reasonable chance that Labour policies would have avoided the imbroglio in the first place.

A few moments later we were gifted with a vintage Majorism, always a sign that he is more rattled than he is letting on. Paddy Ashdown declared that the BSE eradication schedule was descending into "Disorder! Chaos! Parox! And fiasco!" He spat out each word with relish and contempt.

Then he spoiled it by adding: "Abattoirs across the country have been ringing me up to say that they are withdrawing from the scheme!"

The image of a slaughterhouse making a phone call made the more sycophantic Tories collapse in giggles. By this time the Prime Minister was feeling silly too. We know the signs. He pauses, like a comedian poised to deliver a killer punch line. Then he says something quite batty, in this case: "I will only suggest that if abattoirs were ringing the right honourable gentleman, they were soliciting for custom!"

What on earth did he mean? Who can say? Who could possibly care? Peter Tapsell (C, Lindsey E) asked a question of superlative pomposity, even by his high standards.

First night

Classic case of love and guts

Michael Billington

Phaedra's Love Gate Theatre, London

SARAH KANE certainly doesn't give up. Her first play, *Blasted*, was reviled and revered for its graphic violence. In *Phaedra's Love*, at the Gate in Notting Hill, she weaves a variation on classical myth and works her way through masturbation, fellatio, rape, castration and disembowelment.

Viscerally, her play has undeniable power: intellectually, it's hard to see what point it is making. Nothing in the direction of Euripides and Seneca. Kane takes a caustic look at illicit royal passion. Her *Hippolytus* is a heartless, reclusive, present-day prince who keeps to his quarters, where he moodily watches television and plays with remote-controlled toy cars. His stepmother, Phaedra, loves him to distraction and even offers him a heady sexual service.

the court is a model of decorum. Since *Hippolytus* has women sent in on demand, rather like Chinese meals, he is scarcely an exemplar of chastity. Take away the moral framework, and you are left with a sensational melodrama.

Sarah Kane's point appears to be that modern royalty is a dishonest myth; that it poses as a national emblem while being prey to all kinds of tortured passion. But it is never clear whether Kane is attacking royalty as such, or the voracious, voyeuristic populace. When the priest tells the prince that "your sexual indiscretion is of no interest to anyone — the stability of the country is", you wonder on what planet he has been living. And the final image of the people savagely turning on their dysfunctional prince implies that they are even more corrupted than the monarchy itself.

As in *Blasted*, Kane's anger is manifestly sincere, but she has yet to find what Eliot called an "objective correlative" for her fury. Nevertheless, with the action erupting in the midst of the spectators, her own production is undeniably involving, her dialogue is often laconically funny and her cast are admirably devoted.

Cas Harkins as the hermetic Hippolytus, Philippa Williams as the distraught Phaedra and Andrew Maud as a doctor, a priest and Theseus all do sterling work. Kane is obviously a force to reckon with; but I still long to see a play where she persuades the audience of her vision rather than shocks it into submission.



COLOGNE: Bus drivers strike against the government's plan to slash spending next year. Their union, OeTV, plans nationwide action by tens of thousands of workers a day

German 'miracle' begins to fade away

Trade unions are determined to sink planned spending cuts, Ian Traynor in Bonn reports

GERMANY'S famed post-war consensus threatened to unravel yesterday as union and opposition leaders moved to marshal their forces against Chancellor Helmut Kohl's austerity campaign and spending cuts.

The showdown over Dr Kohl's plan to slash spending, to fight his way out of a worsening public finance crisis, could sink the chancellor's dream of a single European currency.

More than 100,000 public sector workers paralysed public transport and postal services in several cities yesterday, and even some government offices in Bonn were affected by warning strikes against a planned two-year pay freeze.

Government and union leaders engaged in an unusual war of words. Dieter Schulte, head of the union federation, accused Wolfgang Schäuble, the number two in the chancellor's Christian Democrats, of lying about the government's programme, which he dubbed a catalogue of "monstrosity".

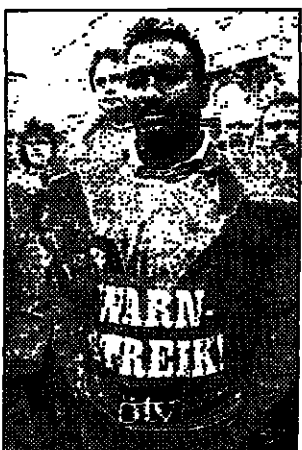
Mr Schulte and other union bosses met leaders of the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) to try and forge an opposition pact against Dr Kohl's plan to freeze public sector wages, cut social security, unemployment benefits and sick pay, and freeze child benefits. The programme is supposed to save DM70 billion (£32 billion) next year, the benchmark year for meeting the terms of the proposed single European currency.



DUSSELDORF: About 3,000 public workers take to the streets in a show of support for union negotiators, who are due to begin a fourth round of pay talks with employers today. The union is demanding a 4.5 per cent pay rise



COLOGNE: The sun shines for commuters if not for the government. Potential passengers in a suburb wait for a train that has been cancelled because of a lightning strike called by the public service workers' union



BONN: A dustman wearing a protective jacket with the legend 'Token Strike' joins a demonstration in the capital against the proposal to impose a wage freeze



KIEL: Hundreds of public service workers swelled the more than 100,000 nationwide in a blow to Chancellor Kohl's plans to reduce the public sector deficit, which threatens his dream of a single European currency



LEIPZIG: A new round of pay talks starts today, but the city's tramworkers in the old East Germany join the national strike in an attempt to warn the government off its planned austerity measures

The SPD will be able to derail the scheme through its control of the upper house of parliament in Bonn.

Dr Kohl needs the cuts to meet the key single currency criteria on budget deficit and state-debt ceilings. But while the cuts programme is barely out of the starting blocks, the grim economic news mounts almost by the day.

On Monday the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris predicted German economic growth this year of a mere 0.5 per cent, compared with a 2.4 per cent projection six months ago. Yesterday the economics ministry in Bonn confirmed the economy has been in recession for the past six months, although it did not use the taboo R-word.

Since Dr Kohl's cuts programme was unveiled, the finance ministry has confirmed that tax revenues for this year and next are expected to fall almost DM99 billion short of what was budgeted, mainly because of soaring unemployment of almost 4 million.

Rudolf Scharping, the SPD parliamentary leader, yesterday urged the finance minister, Theo Waigel, to draft a new 1996 budget including at least DM10 billion in fresh public borrowing — a 17 per cent increase in the slated borrowing requirement this year. This further threatens to torpedo Dr Kohl's aim of cutting the budget deficit to 3 per cent next year, the ceiling for qualifying for European monetary union.

With union leaders warning of a "hot summer" unless the government backs down, Mr Schäuble accused Mr Schulte of "fanning social envy and conflict through exaggerated criticism and unnecessary threats".

"We urge the employee organisations not to revert to the obsolete class-war thinking of bygone decades," Mr Schäuble declared.

While Dr Kohl affects to be unperturbed by the widening polarisation, apparently convinced that the public realises the need for radical reform of Germany's expensive welfare system, union leaders complain that the spending cuts are inequitable, and that company profits are rising much faster than pay.

In Frankfurt yesterday, German share prices rose to an all-time high, encouraged by a strengthening dollar that augurs well for German exports and profits.

The government contends that the cuts are the medicine needed to reinvigorate growth and create jobs. In January it trumpeted the package as the way to halve the 4 million unemployed level by the turn of the century, but the cabinet now reckons only on cutting the level by 800,000, according to the news weekly Focus.

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On the slide

- The German economy, according to the OECD is likely to grow by only 0.5 per cent this year.
Unemployment of 4.2 million (above 10 per cent) is the highest for 60 years.
In western Germany, manufacturing labour costs are DM44 (£19) an hour, compared with £9.50 in Britain.
Public spending accounts for over 50 per cent of GDP, compared with 40.5 per cent in the UK. The tax shortfall is likely to be DM67 billion in 1997.
Inflation is historically low at 1.5 per cent.

Cancer drug trials send shares in profitless company soaring

Ian King

A SMALL Oxford-based biotechnology company that has never sold a product — let alone made a profit — yesterday saw its shares rise by almost 29 each to £38.25 after upbeat news on its latest cancer drug.

British Biotech, which was valued at £152 million when it was floated on the stock market in 1992, was last night worth over £1.9 billion after its shares fell back to end the day up 285p at £33.15. A year ago, the shares were worth just over 25 each.

anti-cancer drug, had been recorded in patients suffering from four different forms of the disease. The company said the trials had suggested that marimastat could slow the progression of ovarian and pancreatic cancer, causing only limited side-effects.

Announcing the details, Peter Lewis, British Biotech's research and development director, said that on the basis of such "encouraging" results, the company was planning a larger trial programme.

British Biotech was quick, however, to play down suggestions that it has discovered a definitive cure for cancer, and insisted that it did not want to build up the hopes of cancer patients.

people must take part in our trial to receive the treatment, and it's down to the doctors to decide who goes in."

Marimastat — which is taken in the form of a pill — is part of a family of drugs called matrix-metalloproteinases, enzymes which are involved in destroying old or damaged tissues, and which are thought to be able to halt the spread of tumours without actually killing them.

City analysts welcomed news of the trials and especially indications that marimastat had helped to prolong the lives of some patients. They said that if, as expected, marimastat reached so-called phase three trials, it would have a 60 to 80 per cent chance of hitting the market.

very good, and the mortality data was particularly exciting. If this is repeated in the phase three trials we are looking at a very big drug indeed."

Other analysts were more sceptical, however, and compared the valuation being put on companies like British Biotech with their American counterparts.

The value given to British Biotech by the City has already made fortunes for several of the group's directors. Keith McCue, the group's chief executive, who co-founded the company 10 years ago, is sitting on a stake worth over £25 million.

US groups unite to stop company patenting 'breast cancer' gene

Martha Walker in Washington

THE first legal and political battle over the ownership of human genes got underway in the United States yesterday, when a coalition of women politicians and public health groups united to prevent the breast cancer gene from falling into private hands.

Myriad Genetics, the biotechnology company which last year identified a gene which seems to be closely linked to breast cancer, is determined to patent the gene and exploit it commercially.

All women have the gene, named BRCA1. A small proportion of them have a mutated version, and of these 85 per cent develop breast cancers.

week, the market for the kit is expected to be worth over \$1 billion a year.

Veteran feminist leaders including Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and Bella Abzug yesterday joined a coalition of over 250 women's and public health groups to protest that human genes should not be patented for profit.

They called for international genetic privacy legislation and filed suit to require the US Patent Office to stop granting patents on genes.

Advertisement for 'mother of god' by DAVID AMBROSE. Text: 'Does someone know your agenda for the coming week better than you? Do you know who they are? Are you being stalked on the net? read mother of god by DAVID AMBROSE Then start worrying... A WHSMITH THUMPING GOOD READ 1996'.

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially cut off. Visible text includes 'Union', 'Ultima', 'Maj', '00 fea', 'erry', 's blunder', 'ough coun', 'Having n', 'Stephen', 'by telling', 'consequ', 'we fired', 'have an'.

Unionists' ultimatum to Major

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, last night warned John Major that he would bring down the Government if there was "any backsliding" on the way for an IRA ceasefire and decommissioning at the outset of the June all-party talks.

Mr Trimble made clear that he expects the proposals contained in the Mitchell report on decommissioning illegal paramilitary to be met in full, following Sinn Féin's announcement that it will sign up to the report's six principles.

Firm commitments would be required to implement and honour the Mitchell suggestion that there should be actual decommissioning alongside talks. Unless this was at the top of the June 10 agenda, and until it was successfully resolved, "there is no merit in broadening the discussions," Mr Trimble said.

"I would remind the (British and Irish) governments and parties that any progress beyond this point requires our agreement. In the wake of (Gerry) Adams's purported acceptance of the Mitchell report, we are alert to the danger of further pressure on John Major to again dilute the Government's position.

"I want to make it clear that any backsliding from prime minister on the twin issues of the ceasefire and decommissioning would be regarded as a fundamental breach of faith... In such circumstances, I would have no hesitation in recommending to my parliamentary colleagues to oppose the Government."

Mr Trimble said that he

had drawn a line in the sand. "Unionists cannot and will not negotiate with a gun pointed at their heads."

Mr Adams, the Sinn Féin president, yesterday refused to condemn paramilitary violence and said he did not know if the IRA would announce a fresh ceasefire.

Speaking a day after announcing that he was prepared to sign up to the six "Mitchell principles" of non-violence, Mr Adams said: "Condemns and denunciations may sound good in terms of the sound-bite or in terms of the politics of the establishment. They won't work."

Launching his party's manifesto for the May 30 elections to a forum which will lead to all-party talks 10 days later, Mr Adams said that Sinn Féin would turn up at the venue for the all-party talks armed only with their mandate. He did not know if the IRA would call a new ceasefire.

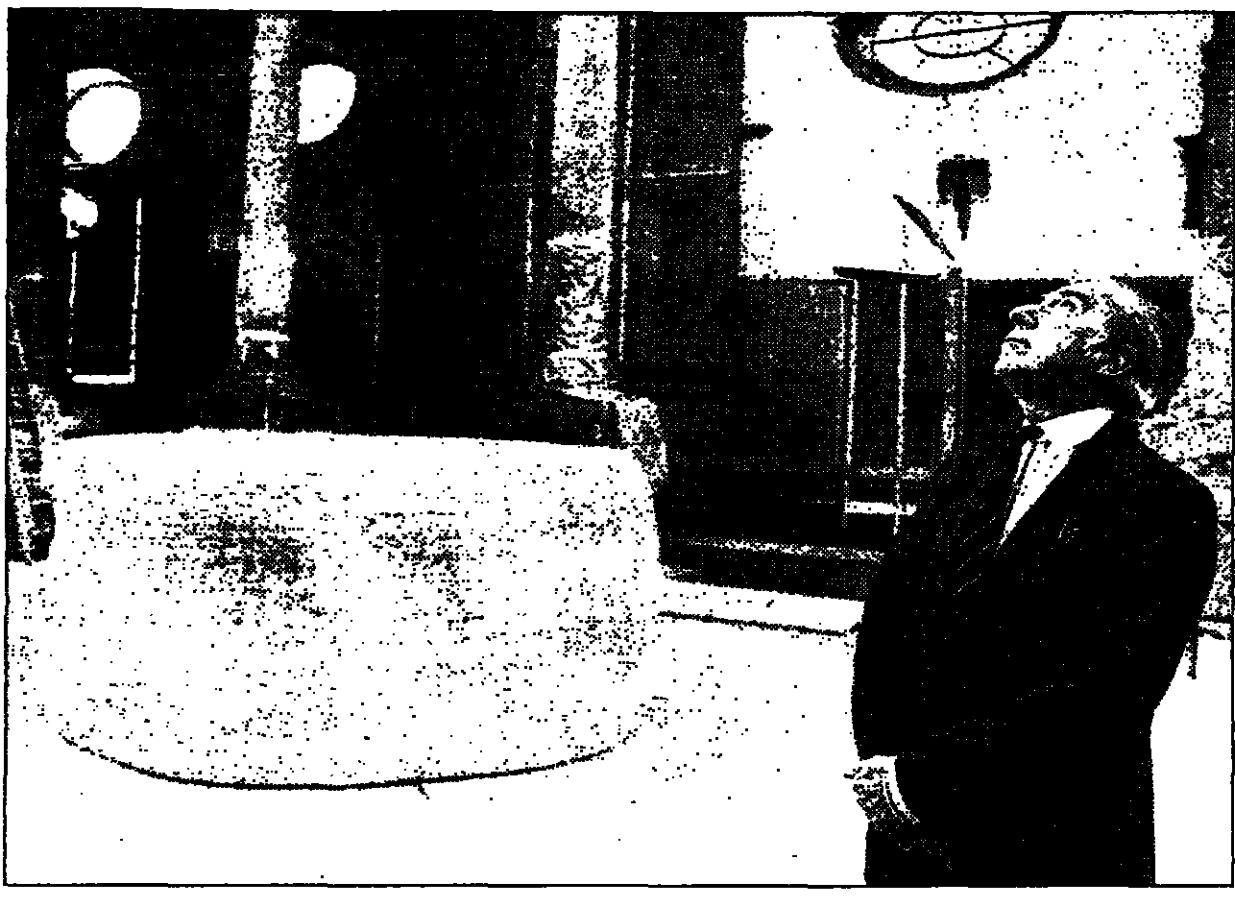
He appealed to Unionist leaders to reflect "at this critical moment" that whenever there were genuine efforts by Irish republicans to move the situation forward, they were "repudiated and rubbished".

The Irish prime minister, John Bruton, said it was likely he and Mr Major would be at the opening of next month's all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland.

● A second IRA prisoner was yesterday transferred from England to an Irish jail. Brendan Dowd, aged 47, serving a life sentence for three counts of attempted murder, was handed over to the custody of Irish prison officers at Stansted airport, to be taken to Portlaoise prison. Last week Patrick Kelly was moved from Northern Ireland to the republic.



Manna from heaven... Lord St John in his incarnation as Arts Minister appraising the Henry Moore altar in St Stephen Walbrook, London, and, left, the bronze horses of San Marco



Former Minister discovers the fine art of living like a lord — at a total cost of £800,000 to the taxpayer

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

IT IS one of the most exclusive clubs in the country. It pays £200,000 a year in rent, its chairman spends £20,000 a year on car hire, and it produces a glossy annual brochure at a cost of £10,800. Yet, despite appearances, the Royal Fine Art Commission is not a club but "the ultimate authority for consultation on matters of taste and aesthetics", according to its remit.

Yesterday that taste came under withering attack with the publication of a Department of National Heritage report, commissioned by the former Heritage Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, in March 1994. It puts the overall cost of the commission to the taxpayer at £800,000 per year. The commission exists to advise the Government on architectural projects.

The report, by former civil servant Sir Geoffrey Chipperfield, condemns the lavish style of the commission's chairman, Lord St John of Fawsley, former Conservative Arts Minister Norman St John-Stevens.

When not enjoying the attention of his two deputy secretaries, three secretaries, a part-time public relations assistant and his driver, Lord Fawsley, according to Who's Who, is also a member of several London clubs, including White's, the Garrick, Pratt's, the Arts Club, Grillon's and The Other.

The report was completed in the summer of 1994, but has been doing the round of government departments as they attempt to coordinate their responses. It had been thought that the delay was to allow Lord Fawsley time to reach the end of his second five-year term before bowing out gracefully. But two weeks ago he was granted a third

term of office on the recommendation of ministers.

Mr Chipperfield singles out the commission's £200,000 accommodation charges in his report, saying: "While these are no doubt reasonable for a building of the size and character of 7, St James's Square, I have questioned the need for accommodation as impressive as this house provides."

There are 18 unelected commissioners, including Lord Fawsley. They include architects, planners and designers, ranging from Giles Worsley, editor of Prince Charles's favourite architecture magazine, to property developer Stuart Lipton, traditionalist architect Quinlan Terry and the more modernist Ian Ritchie.

The full colour annual report introduced by Lord Fawsley to replace a black and white document has been described as a "Hellsyner-funded version of 'Taxo' magazine". It includes photographs of Lord Fawsley with royalty and politicians, and contains approving reports on architecture commissioned by Lord Fawsley.

The Chipperfield report says: "The commission should, as in all things, consider whether the annual report could be produced more economically."

The most recent controversy followed Lord Fawsley's condemnation of the proposed 500ft Millennium ferris wheel on London's South Bank. Despite the approval of leading architects, including Sir Richard Rogers and Sir Norman Foster, he dismissed the plan as "wholly unsuitable" and was reportedly rude to the architects concerned at a meeting.

This led to an apology from the then secretary of the commission, Sherban Cantacuzino, who wrote to the architects saying: "I am sure that he enjoys putting people down, all of us have suffered from his bullying."

David Marks, one of the architects behind the ferris wheel, said yesterday: "It is a reflection of the quality of its membership and chairman rather than the institution. As a concept it is quite a good idea."

Lord Fawsley was unavailable for comment yesterday. In a statement, however, the commission, established in 1924, welcomed the report's "helpful recommendations".

ter in Margaret Thatcher's first government from 1979 to 1981. He took senior shadow roles during the years in between.

The MP for Chelmsford from 1964 to 1987, he has since been made a life peer concentrated his efforts on the arts.

With his regal tastes and Edwardian style — he carries a walking stick and has been known to wear purple slippers embroidered with his family crest — Lord St John has proved to be a Catholic intellectual with distinctly eclectic tastes in both art and politics.

In the House he opposed abortion rights and hanging, while supporting birth control and the preservation of hereditary peers. He testified for the defence in the Lady Chatterley trial in 1960. When it comes to architecture he is close to the traditional values of the Prince of Wales, but his favourite painting is the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock's Number 12.

The unpredictable nature of his tastes appear to be rivaled only by the aggressive manner in which he fights his corner. When arguing against the proposal to put a ferris wheel on the South Bank, one architect said, "he sat on the table, centre-stage, and conducted the meeting with no reference to anybody else".



Lord St John... known for his eclecticism

Regal figure with an uncompromising line of approach

ONCE referred to as "the thinking woman's Larry Grayson," Lord St John of Fawsley is one of the few people who can still be relied on to voice his unequivocal support for both the royal family and the Pope, writes Cory Young.

The son of a Greek engineer and an Irish mother, Lord St John, aged 67, was minister of state for the arts in Edward Heath's government and arts minis-

400 feared dead in ferry tragedy

Chris McGreal in Nairobi

MORE than 400 people are believed to have drowned after a packed Tanzanian ferry capsized and sank on Lake Victoria early yesterday. By nightfall only 120 people had been rescued and 25 bodies recovered.

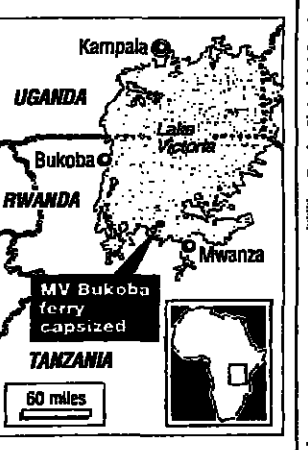
The disaster happened when the MV Bukoba struck a rock about 20 miles north-west of the Tanzanian port of Mwanza, at the southern end of Lake Victoria. Two other ships spotted her capsizing and a number of vessels came to the rescue, including the largest ship on the lake, the MV Victoria.

But despite their efforts, the ferry, owned by Tanzanian Railways, is reported to have sunk so swiftly that there was little hope for most of the passengers, crammed inside cabins and the hold.

Many of the victims are likely to have been Tanzanian merchants and peasant farmers, transporting goods and crops to market, although the ferries are also popular with foreign backpackers.

Salim Nsoma, principal secretary at the Tanzanian ministry of transport, said last night that the search would continue, despite the poor chances of finding survivors. Crocodiles and hippopotamuses are among predators in the lake.

Tanzania's president, Benjamin Mkapa, declared three



days of national mourning for the victims.

Mr Nsoma denied reports that the ferry was overloaded, and said it had recently passed a seaworthiness inspection. However, Tanzanian railway sources said the ageing vessel had been due for retirement very soon.

The ferry was among many which ply Lake Victoria, usually overflowing with passengers travelling between Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Traffic on Africa's largest lake is largely unregulated and since the collapse of the region's trading bloc, 20 years ago, and the disintegration of the jointly-run East African Railways.

A crowded boat capsized in rough weather on April 25, on its way to eastern Uganda, and at least 81 people were drowned. Only six survived.

Hogg's blundering progress through councils of Europe

continued from page 1

forced to put the best face on things by predicting an imminent lifting of the ban on by-products such as gelatin and tallow.

The Government has hung itself to that limited prospect ever since and has secured the grudging support of the European Commission — but again this week its miscalculation became apparent when the expert veterinary committee refused to endorse even a partial lifting of the ban.

Again the minister blundered, letting it be known that Britain would be prepared to slaughter up to 60,000 cattle,

having previously insisted that 42,000 was the maximum it could do. That allowed the issue of the call to become hopelessly mixed with the by-products ban and left European asking whether Britain was serious about eradicating the disease.

Mr Hogg bats on implacably. "Member states should now accept their responsibilities and agree to a rapid ending of the ban," he told the Commons. The trouble is that after 63 days of Hogg diplomacy, bluster, politicking and threats, the colleagues in Brussels still don't believe him.

Megabuck pay and it's all legal

Sarah Pyle

THE closest most British lawyers have come to a million-dollar legal world of television's LA Law, but yesterday an American firm brought the reality of US-style pay packets to the UK by placing an advertisement offering up to £700,000 for three top City solicitors.

Recruitment consultant Joe Macrae, acting for the New York partnership, said: "New York firms offer higher, and in some cases significantly higher, wages in London than their British counterparts. This has started to have an effect as lawyers at the senior partner and assistant level realise this."

He said £450,000 was the highest previously advertised salary for a lawyer.

The latest advert was for three corporate finance solicitors "comfortable with mergers, acquisitions and reconstructions" to join Chadbourne & Parke at between £200,000 and £700,000, depending on track record.

At £700,000 a year, home-grown lawyers would join the ranks of the superstar soccer players like Stan Collymore, who at £16,000-a-week is the country's highest paid footballer.

Stephen Rodney, director of recruitment company Quarry Dougall, said that leading American law firms have been offering top salaries for two years.

He said: "It is not a case of upping the ante for the very top jobs, although there is gaumping for assistant partners which the American firms are involved in."

He defended the size of the

salaries and said the parallels with footballers were more to do with the high quality performance demanded than with the size of the fees.

"If you pay £7 million for Andy Cole and he doesn't score goals then you would expect him to be axed. Lawyers are expected to produce the goods as well. You don't just pay somebody that kind of money to come in and sweep the floor."

Laurence Simons, head of an international legal recruitment firm, said: "At the top end of the market in the main cities like Washington and LA, it is not uncommon for salaries to be about \$1 million which is about £700,000."

He said salaries of £500,000 were a very rare achievement for British solicitors. A partner with a top City law company would be more likely to make about £200,000 a year.

But at dining tables in Washington, top lawyers have been shaking their heads sympathetically at the relative poverty of their British counterparts for some time.

A former Rhodes Scholar who studied at Oxford University said: "Our British friends really do not earn anything like the amounts we do."

The pay at Chadbourne & Parke may be American, but the income tax will be British. A Coopers & Lybrand tax specialist estimated a total of £250,000 on the £700,000 pay packet and £80,000 on the £200,000 offer.

There is another price to pay, Mr Simons said: "They work harder in the States. Over there they want 100 per cent of your body and soul. Here they just want 100 per cent of your body and 90 per cent of your soul."

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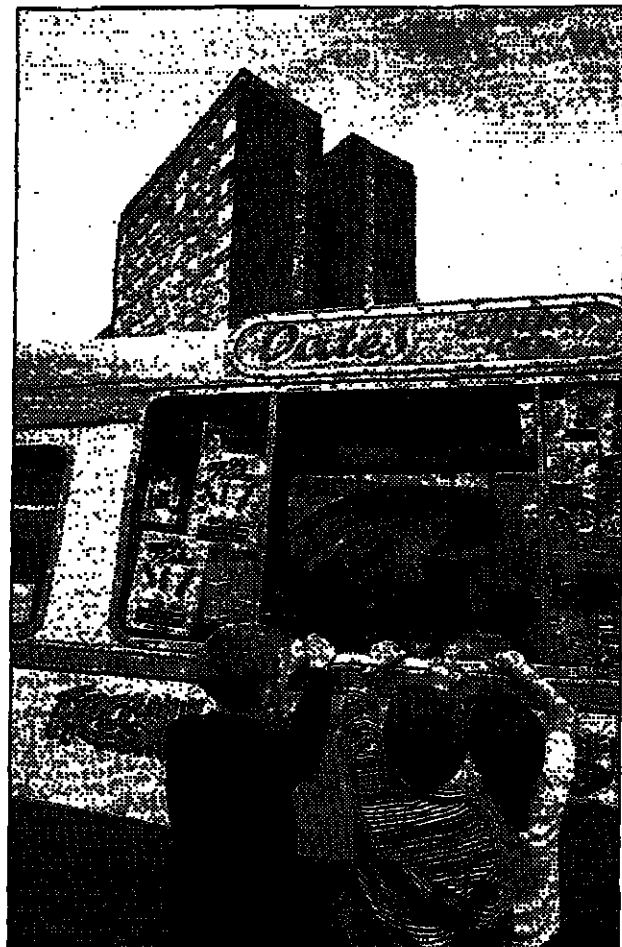
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Having made a fortune from his "downsizing" message, Stephen Roach can now expect to earn it all over again by telling companies how to cope with the malign consequences of heeding his earlier advice. "But Steve, we fired all our workers, just like you told us, and now we have an empty factory. What can we do?" "Uh, rehire them."

Francis Wheen G2 page 3



Boy tells how stone slab killed pensioner

Child, 11, denies manslaughter at block of flats, reports Martin Wainwright

A PRIMARY schoolboy accused of killing a pensioner with a concrete slab told a court yesterday that he had toppled the missile from the top of a nine-storey tower block because he liked being naughty and it was "fun".

The 11-year-old boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, clung to his mother's arm at Leeds crown court as he denied the manslaughter of Edna Condie, aged 74. Her skull was crushed by the 19lb slab as she returned from shopping.

The boy admitted heaving the dislodged stone on to the parapet of Grayson Heights in Kirkstall, Leeds. "I just stood

on my tiptoes, pushed it over and let it drop down. I was having some fun. It is fun being bad and no fun being good."

He admitted he knew what he had done was wrong and said he was able to tell the difference between right and wrong.

He and two friends had evaded the block's security system by ringing an elderly tenant's buzzer and persuading her they lived in the block. "Then we went on the roof and started throwing things off," he said.

"We were playing about and throwing stuff off the roof." He denied he knew people were below and said



Young life (top left) in the area of Grayson Heights, and (above) the flats where a pensioner died. PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN ANDERSON

he had not wanted the slab to hit anyone.

Earlier the court was told the boy, who was 10 at the time of the tragedy last August, had laughed and shouted: "I'm not bothered" after being told someone had been killed by the slab.

Two of his friends, aged nine at the time and with him on the roof, said they had seen people below and warned him not to topple the stone.

The court heard the children had been taking part in a craze for bluffing their way into the flats and hurling small stones, rubbish and oranges off the roof.

Interviewed on video, one

of the pair, who also cannot be named, said: "[The defendant] found this brick. I said: 'You are not throwing that off. He said: 'Just watch me and see' and just threw it off and hit a lady on the head."

Looking distressed, he told a woman interviewer on the video, filmed the day after the tragedy: "I saw it hit her." He made a crunching sound, imitating the slab landing, and said: "She fell down on the floor."

Mrs Condie, who lived in the flats, was killed instantly, collapsing in a pool of blood in front of her husband George, aged 76, and daughter Janet Smith, aged 43. The court heard the three boys

ran off, and one of the defendant's friends immediately told his mother what had happened.

The second boy to give video evidence said the defendant had led the way up to the roof, saying: "I've got a surprise for you."

He made his two friends turn their backs while he lifted the slab on to the parapet, and then said: "You can turn round now."

The boy witness told the jury of nine women and three men: "When I looked down, I saw two people. It took about two seconds for the brick to hit the lady. I heard a bang and somebody screaming."

The case continues today.

Tory MPs quit after media bill revolt

Rebecca Smithers and Patrick Wintour

TWO rising rightwing stars of the Tory back benches were forced to resign as parliamentary private secretaries last night after they voted against the central plank of the Government's Broadcasting Bill limiting cross-media ownership.

John Whittingdale, MP for Colchester-South and Maldon, once political adviser to Margaret Thatcher and now an aide to the education minister Eric Forth, and Peter Atkinson, MP for Hexham and FPS to two Foreign Office ministers including Jeremy Hanley, defied government whips with an amendment.

They tabled and then backed the amendment which would have allowed newspaper groups such as News International and the Mirror Group to buy stakes in terrestrial television companies. The two men immediately resigned when their amendment was defeated by just one vote — 14 to 13.

Last night Mr Whittingdale said: "I am very sorry to leave the Government."

Mr Atkinson said his resignation was a "a formality", and that he had no regrets. "I believe in liberalisation and

free trade. I am fundamentally opposed to shutting the Mirror out of the market."

Both men with heritage ministers before yesterday's vote to try to persuade the Government to accept a relaxation.

The amendment would have cut through the Broadcasting Bill by allowing newspaper groups to buy stakes in terrestrial TV companies regardless of their share of the newspaper market, so long as it was decreed to be in the public interest. Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, inheriting a policy from Stephen Dorrell, had insisted no newspaper group with more than a 20 per cent share in the newspaper market should be allowed a stake in commercial TV.

The threshold blocks both suspect Murdoch's News International and the Mirror from seeking a stake in Channel 3 and 5 TV franchises.

The Labour heritage team, led by Geoff Hoon and Lewis Moonie, claimed the 20 per cent share had been an arbitrary choice and could only be seen as an attempt to prevent the Labour-leaning Mirror Group building a sizeable TV empire to match that of Associated Newspapers and News International's satellite TV interests.

Nike scores Euro 96 own goal with stars of poster campaign

John Duncan Sports Correspondent

THE curse of Nike has struck Euro 96, with many of the footballers chosen by the company for a poster campaign either omitted from their national squad, or on the point of being omitted.

Until last month one even looked as if he would spend the tournament in jail.

The Frenchmen Eric Cantona and David Ginola would not be playing in the European soccer championships next month sent shivers around Nike headquarters and revived memories of the sportswear company's disastrous 1992 Olympic poster campaign. Then it put all its resources into pushing the "invincible" talents of Nour-Eddine Morceli (did not start), Sergei Bubka (did not feature), and Michael Johnson (did not run very fast).

The company has invested in 2,000 poster sites, including several hundred featuring Cantona which declare: "I've worked hard to improve English football — now it

must be destroyed". Not by him — he has not made France's final 22.

Another has Newcastle United team-mate Ginola and Les Ferdinand together with the slogan "Friendship expires 6/96". Ginola is out and Ferdinand is doubtful for England.

Nike is left with defender Paolo Maldini, the captain, and a Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert, who was facing jail in Holland over a fatal car accident, but escaped a jail term last month.

The company has become as creative in finding ways to explain its situation as it has in devising the posters. "We make bold statements and enjoy not being 'safe' which means occasionally our campaigns can go against us," said the spokesman.

"These posters are about players' loyalties. In the Ferdinand/Ginola poster we are trying to say that though the two play for the same club, come summer their loyalties will go out of the window. With the Cantona poster the caption does not say he himself will destroy England." Something of a Nike distinction.

Fear outweighs science as distrust clogs EU diplomacy on beef

Popular opinion on Continent blocks lifting of export ban

Owen Bowcott

JOHN Major's threat to retaliate against the European Union if the ban on British beef exports is not lifted focused attention yesterday on the scientific row at the heart of the diplomatic crisis.

European doubts over Britain's plans to eradicate BSE have long been heightened by the fact that nearly 27,000 cattle born after the Government's 1988 ban on infected feed have contracted the disease.

If previous measures trumped by ministers at West-

mission is small. Nor has political wordplay eased fears that BSE may trigger a wide-scale outbreak of CJD, the human equivalent of the disease. The Government repeatedly describes British beef as safe to eat, but officials qualify the statement when pressed.

The channels of diplomatic communication between the ministry and other EU agriculture ministers are clogged with months of distrust. The Spanish agricultural counselor in London, Luis Esteruelas, yesterday claimed that his ministers had "not been well briefed" by their UK counterparts.

"There's a lack of information," he said. "We don't have details of their slaughter programme. We were briefed by the ministry last Friday but

they never told us about 80,000 cattle being slaughtered. We want a thorough, detailed and specific programme of BSE eradication."

Spain has insisted that EU inspectors oversee the process to ensure it is conducted effectively. Some member states have suggested a 200,000-head cull as a minimum.

Britain says such mass destruction of herds is not based on clear grounds of risk limitation.

But it is objectors like Germany, openly admitting that the ultimate aim must be to restore consumer confidence in beef, which have touched upon what appears to be the main source of resistance to lifting the ban — the continental domestic voters.

Popular fears about the ef-

fect of BSE appear, paradoxically, to be greatest in those countries least affected by the disease. While consumption in Britain, according to the ministry, has reached nearly 85 per cent of the levels prior to the latest scare, in Germany consumption is only at 70 per cent and in Italy not much above 50 per cent. With such widespread fears, there is little political incentive for European Union ministers to lift the ban.

Such a cynical calculation may also be leading British negotiators to belittle the genuine scientific fears being raised in Brussels. "I think it's more a matter of public opinion," a government spokesman suggested yesterday. "There's a bit of science in there but not a lot at this stage."

Unrepentant Europeans prepare for confrontation

EUROPEAN politicians and officials who opposed ending the beef ban were unrepentant last night as they prepared for a long confrontation with Britain.

Even Britain's allies were reluctant to support Mr Major's non-co-operation policy.

Bonn: German officials gave no signals of retreat from the hard line Bonn has taken on the ban.

They accused Downing Street of overreacting. "We have no interest in keeping the BSE scare alive. Each of

us has important national interests and maybe bull semen and gelatin are in the national interest as exports," a foreign ministry official said. "But that doesn't justify bringing the entire European Union process to a grinding halt."

Bonn insisted it was acting to shore up collapsed confidence in its own beef industry. "The German consumer is not interested in confidence-building measures, but in food safety."

Madrid: "We cannot play around with consumers' health," said Spain's new agriculture minister, Loyola de Palacio, defending her country's decision to oppose lifting the ban.

Speaking in Brussels, she said Britain had not produced a coherent plan to eradicate

mad cow disease. Ms Palacio described the slaughter proposals as insufficient.

Paris: The Elysee Palace said: "But that doesn't justify our decision to go slow on European projects. But a spokesman for the president underlined France's support for a partial lifting of the EU ban.

Echoing the support President Jacques Chirac offered Britain during his visit last week, the spokesman said: "We had hoped to see scientific agreement in the veterinary committee. We supported a partial lifting of the ban."

The agriculture minister, Philippe Vasseur, said: "It is not in Britain's interest to tighten its stand. Great Britain will complicate matters if it goes ahead with its threat."

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Sibling blood is hope for sick children

Erlend Clouston on a new treatment

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD boy with leukaemia has become the first in Britain to undergo an experimental operation which offers new hope to sufferers. It was announced yesterday. Two weeks later, another child, aged seven, suffering from a rare form of anaemia was also given the same treatment in another hospital.

The four-year-old Asian boy, identified only as Bilal, received a transfusion of blood taken from the umbilical cord of his newborn brother. Such blood is rich in stem cells, from which other blood cells form. Doctors at Glasgow's royal hospital for sick children must now wait up to a year to see whether Bilal improves after the operation, which took place on



Bilal, aged four, with his younger brother Aadih, whose donation of umbilical cord blood may help him fight leukaemia

PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MCELROD

April 4. He has been discharged from hospital. Leukaemia, a form of cancer of the blood, is usually treated by chemotherapy, with or without transplants of bone marrow, where blood is produced. But doctors believe transfusion of umbilical cord blood may be more effective. The second transplant, on

April 23, took place at London's Great Ormond Street children's hospital on Vijay Negi, from north London. He received blood cord cells taken at the birth of his baby sister. Vijay suffers from Fanconi anaemia — said to be an "extremely rare" condition with no cure other than stem cell transplantation. Yesterday

he was said to be making a "very good recovery" at Great Ormond Street. There has been growing interest in harnessing the potential of the umbilical cord. Around 200 transplants have been completed abroad, but until last month all British attempts had failed. The procedure raises the

ethical issue of "designer conception". Bilal's mother was already pregnant before the possibility of recycling her cord blood was raised, but his doctor said desperate parents might feel driven to conceive in order to save a child. "It is not something I would encourage; children should be conceived and

born for themselves," said consultant haematologist Brenda Gibson. The hospital had failed to find a suitable bone marrow donor for Bilal, who had had leukaemia from birth. At present, suitable donors can only be found for about three out of 10 patients, some of whom die while on the waiting list.

Cancer op cancelled 10 times

Sarah Bosoley

DAVID MILLER had prepared himself as well as he could for his liver cancer operation, knowing there was a 10 per cent chance he could die under the surgeon's knife. He had not prepared himself for the trauma of having that operation cancelled 10 times by the hospital, often a few hours before he was due to be wheeled into theatre.

Finally, he could take no more and made arrangements to have the operation privately. But when the surgeon — the same one who would have operated under the NHS — eventually opened him up, it was decided that the tumours were too advanced to remove.

Recovering from surgery at his Surrey home before he undergoes chemotherapy, Mr Miller, aged 64, said he did not know whether the delay, which lasted a month, had worsened his condition to the point where it became inoperable. "But it does beg the question," he said. "It will always be in the back of our minds."

His case bears out the warnings of 27 medical directors in London and the South-east, who last year warned the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, that cancer patients were failing to get the surgery they needed because there were not enough intensive care beds. It is exactly the reason Mr Miller was given. Three weeks after Mr Miller first wrote to protest at his treatment, the Hammersmith Hospital's NHS Trust admitted it was at fault.

"I was appalled to read the catalogue of events which you recounted in your letters," wrote the general manager Fiona Kergoat on May 1. "I apologise unreservedly for this totally unacceptable chain of events and the distress and inconvenience that this must have caused you and your family... I am so very sorry that the trust failed to provide you with the treatment that you required."

Mr Miller, who will tell his story tonight on television in the BBC programme Here and Now, said: "I don't want to draw attention to my



David Miller: victim of lack of intensive care beds

plight. I just want to publicise the appalling situation at Hammersmith Hospital in the hope that it will enable the administration to reorganise their procedures so that it doesn't happen to anybody else."

He spoke of his "feeling of utter helplessness". The worst moment, he said, was the fourth cancellation, minutes before he and his wife Rosemary were due to leave the house.

"The crude word is gutted — it was like a blow in the stomach. I had packed yet again and Rosemary and I were going to leave at 1.30 and we got a phone call at 1.20 saying sorry, it's not on."

The couple have a son, Patrick, aged 25, and a daughter, Katrina, aged 23, who is a nurse at St Thomas's Hospital. "She is appalled, and so are her colleagues," he said. Mr Miller was first booked for admission on March 26. After several postponements, he was admitted on April 2 for an operation on April 4. On April 13, with the surgeon about to leave the country for a week, he went home. Ten days later, he was admitted for the operation privately.

Mr Miller blamed "the system and a shortage of money". Yesterday the hospital said its intensive care unit "has been under severe pressure over the past three months, with a number of extremely ill patients occupying beds for long periods." The trust is to hold a full inquiry.

Girls face murder trial

John Mullin

TWO schoolgirls were yesterday charged with murdering Louise Allen, the 13-year-old who died after a disturbance following a visit to a fairground in Corby, Northamptonshire, last month.

The defendants, aged 12 and 13, appeared before magistrates at a specially convened sitting of a youth court in Kettering, Northamptonshire, yesterday.

They had been accused of manslaughter, but Crown Prosecution Service lawyers decided to charge them with

the more serious offence of murder.

The girls, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were remanded in the custody of the local authority.

Louise died the day after she was allegedly kicked unconscious as she went to the aid of her best friend, Rebecca Tyson. Doctors switched off her life support machine at Kettering general hospital after consulting her parents.

A post mortem examination showed she died from a brain haemorrhage. Her father, John Allen, aged 40, a lorry driver, from Glasgow before moving to the former steel town, said: "We

are devastated at the loss of our little soul, Louise. No words will ever be able to describe the pain we feel now she is no longer with us. She was a wonderful daughter who, like any normal 13-year-old girl, lived life to the full."

Mr Allen, and his wife, Ellen, 34, have two other children, John, 10, and two-year-old Dean.

More than 1,000 people crowded into Our Lady and Pope John School, Corby, which Louise had attended, for a mass in her honour.

The Rev Peter Wilson, Dean of Corby, and the family's local parish priest, spoke of Louise as a mother figure.

Thieves silence TV comedy

Martin Walker

TELEVISION'S notorious chatterbox Nora Baty has finally been silenced by a gang of thieves — who are in for a shock.

The haul of £75,000 worth of BBC sound recording equipment, snatched from a film crew's van on location near Huddersfield, includes the only copy of the soundtrack for a new series of the comedy Last of the Summer Wine.

"For their sake, you can only hope they're fans," said a spokeswoman at the BBC, conjuring up images of burglars examining their

spoils and finding only Nora berating her elderly Pennine suitors.

The corporation has a more serious reason for offering £500 for the tapes' return: in spite of the dodgy nature of the Summer Wine cast, viewers are unlikely to take kindly to the series as a silent movie.

Without the tapes, scenes including this year's Christmas special may have to be re-shot, while actors will have to re-record their Yorkshire quips to be synchronised with film.

The tapes were the only version, the BBC said, because shooting of the five episodes had only finished late the previous day.

The three men in balaclavas who broke into the van at 4.30am on Monday are said not to resemble Compo and his pals, but their haul may prove as useless as the Summer Wine trio's various inventive schemes.

"The tapes are of absolutely no use to anyone but us — just rushes of sound which won't make sense without the film," said the spokeswoman.

The reward has been offered on the John Birtian principle that paying it out would be considerably cheaper than having to re-record the five episodes.

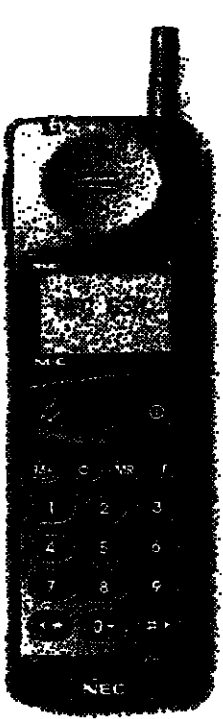


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Right wing tries to score points from admiral's death

Suicide 'caused by snotty Clintonoids'

Martin Walker in Washington

ADMIRAL Mike Boorda was a victim of political correctness in the White House, President Reagan's secretary of the navy said yesterday, as conservatives and Republicans fought to score political points from last week's suicide of the chief of naval operations.

The former navy secretary, John Lehman, claimed that Adm Boorda was "driven to his death by a relentless lynch mob" of anti-militarists in the White House.

His attack came as President Clinton addressed the memorial services for Adm Boorda at the National Cathedral, where he stressed: "No person should ever question his deep sense of honour."

The admiral took his life on Thursday, rather than face two Newsweek reporters who were to interview him on his right to wear combat pins, in the shape of the letter V for valour, on his medals. His suicide note said that he had worn them by "honest mistake" but did not want to make the navy suffer another bruising scandal.

For the right wing, Adm Boorda was one more casualty in "the firestorm that has

been consuming the navy" since the Tailhook scandal over sexual harassment, according to Mr Lehman. Tailhook was the convention of navy carrier pilots, at which drunken celebrations spilled over in 1990 to sexual harassment of women sailors.

"The scandal was sure to have faded but for the fact that the new president, who in his younger days said proudly that he 'loathed' the military, brought in an administration staffed by former war protesters who largely shared the prejudices of those in the navy based on the 'snotty Clintonoids' lynch mob," Mr Lehman said.

"Add to these factions the more extreme wings of the feminist and gay movements. They piled on because the navy has epitomised to them what they see as the homophobic, macho culture of the military, and they see a great opportunity to bring it down."

Purges of the navy's upper ranks by "the White House commissars of political correctness", not just the spirit of the navy was now at risk but also its military effectiveness, Mr Lehman said.

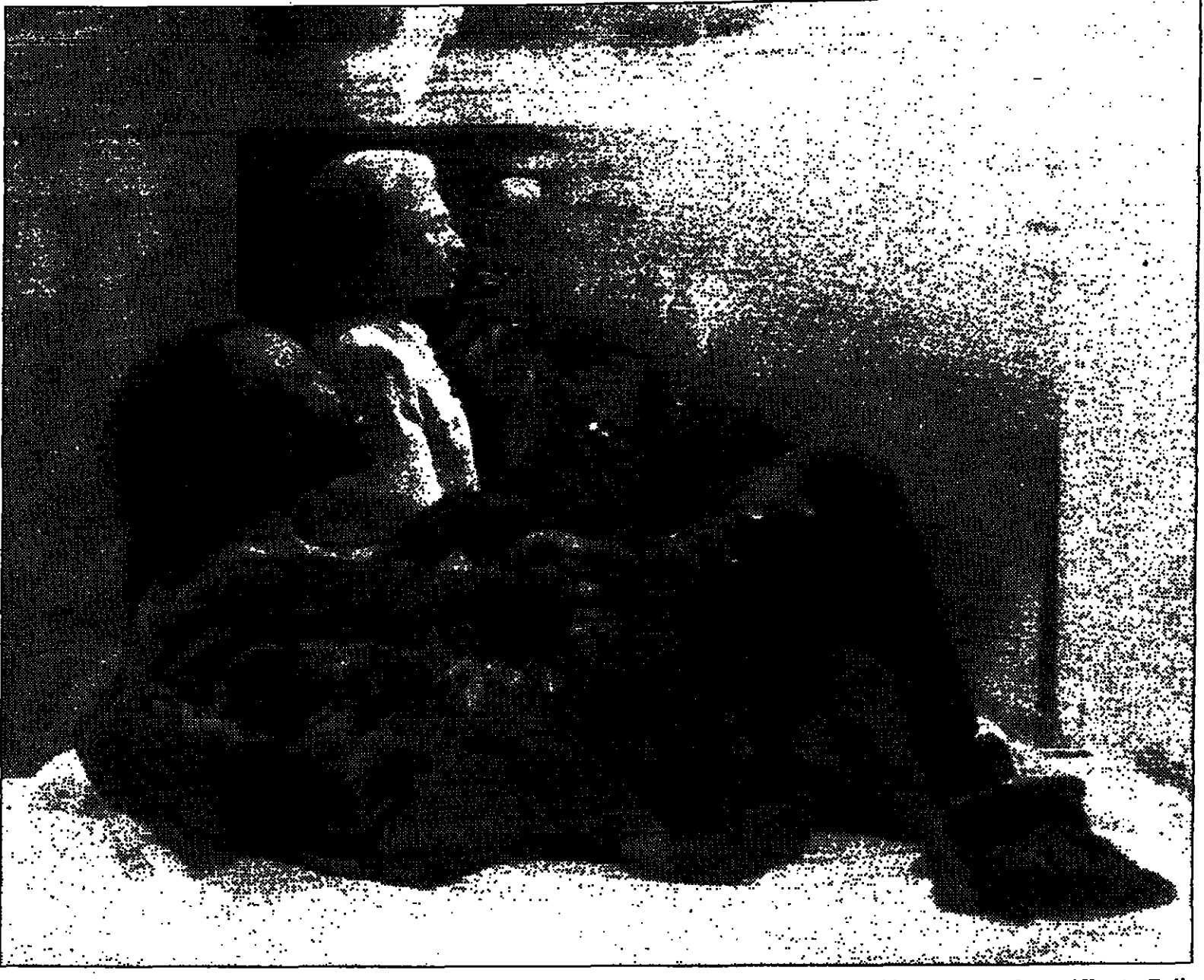
Fourteen admirals have been cashiered and over 300 naval aviators have had their careers ended, all without even a semblance of due process. Thousands more are leaving the service in disgust;

83 per cent of post-command aviator commanders resigned last year. These are the best of the best and won't be replaceable for a generation."

Another former navy secretary, James Webb, has attacked "the destruction of the careers of some of the finest aviators in the navy based on hearsay and unsubstantiated allegations".

A new furor has arisen over the failure of Adm Boorda to stand up for Admiral Stanley Arthur. His promotion to commander-in-chief in the Pacific was blocked after a complaint that he had not "sensitive" reviewed the case of a woman helicopter pilot appealing against a fitness report saying she did not fly well based on the defence secretary, William Perry, stressed yesterday: "It is time to stop evaluating people by activities at Tailhook five years ago." He added that he had now formally asked the Senate armed services committee to stop considering Tailhook when they reviewed navy candidates for promotion.

The ultra-conservative Washington Times yesterday said Adm Boorda "let down his belt" by betraying it into the hands of snotty Clintonoids who think that no opportunity must be missed to emasculate the military."



Peru's ice maiden comes in from the cold after 500 years on top of a volcano

AN Incan mummy that lay for 500 years in a frozen tomb on top of a Peruvian volcano made her international debut yesterday with a little help from Hillary Clinton (behind case), Joanne Kamen writes from Washington.

The mummy, known as the "ice maiden", will be on display in a special air-

conditioned chamber at the National Geographic Society until June 19, when she will be returned to Peru for further study.

Struck on the head and apparently sacrificed to the gods at the age of 13, the girl, who was wrapped in the finest alpaca wool, was discovered last September by Johan Reinhard, an anthropologist at Chicago's Field Museum, and his colleagues.

Her death was probably meant to appease the gods, possibly to avert disaster, Mr Reinhard told reporters. He said she must have had a sense of majesty and "a phenomenal courage". The unweaving was also attended by the Peruvian

president, Alberto Fujimori. The mummy was recently studied at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where doctors used the most advanced x-ray and computer technology to peer inside with little damage to the best-preserved mummy ever found from pre-Columbian America. PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN JAFFE

Mayor motors ahead in Nicaragua power race

Chris Taylor in Managua reports on the frontrunner for the presidency

ARNOLDO ALEMÁN has a knack for the telling gesture. One of his first acts on becoming mayor of Managua, capital of Nicaragua, was to send council workmen to whitewash over the revolutionary murals which proliferated under the Sandinista government.

In the six years since then, the pugnacious rightwing populist has transformed himself from a political nobody into the frontrunner for Nicaragua's presidential election in October.

So run down was the sprawling city he inherited that when he built the country's first roundabout and put a coloured fountain in the middle, it was hailed as a triumph of urban renewal.

He was elected to the city council in 1990 when the Sandinistas were swept from office at national and local level. But his real success lay in organising a coup among opposition alliance (UNO) councillors to displace their

original candidate for mayor. While the UNO quickly fragmented, its parliamentary leaders cold-shouldered by the president they had helped elect, Mr Alemán remained the only unreconstructed anti-Sandinista holding executive power.

He has used his office's resources to build his standing, and has survived a corruption case in which his subordinates were found guilty of misusing public funds.

He has assiduously forged unity among the various liberal anti-Sandinista groups as a basis for his presidential bid.

His main rival is likely to be Daniel Ortega, the former president who won the Sandinista party (FSLN) nomination earlier this month. Recent polls have put Mr Alemán in the lead with about 30 per cent, but suggest the election may well go to a second-round run-off.

The Sandinistas depict the elections as a battle to stop the country returning to a new version of the 45-year Somoza dictatorship, as personified by Mr Alemán, who was briefly imprisoned under the Sandinista government for alleged "counter-revolutionary" activities.

The FSLN chose a wealthy non-Sandinista landowner as

Mr Ortega's running mate to help foster a policy of alliances with other parties in what some have seen as a "stop Alemán" campaign.

The FSLN's most obvious potential ally is the Sandinista Renewal Movement, a breakaway party led by Sergio Ramírez, Mr Ortega's former vice-president. However, it is hard to envisage the two making up before the first round.

Of the many other candidates, only Alvaro Robelo's well-financed campaign has raised a blip in opinion polls. He is a former ambassador to Italy and his Arriba Nicaragua (Up with Nicaragua) party is apparently modelled on Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia. He promises to use his business contacts to attract foreign investment.

But another Italian connection has dealt a blow to his campaign, with Italian prosecutors naming him in connection with an investigation into money-laundering. He denies any wrongdoing.

Whoever Mr Alemán eventually faces in the election, Managua, home to about a quarter of the country's 4.2 million people, will be the crucial battleground. He has spent six years there building up his advantage.

Saddam may slip up on oil deal

Iraqi joy at the easing of sanctions could backfire on the president, writes Ian Black

IRAQIS celebrated in the streets of Baghdad yesterday after Saddam Hussein's acceptance of the United Nations oil-for-food deal.

It is being widely welcomed by his impoverished people, but their jubilation may be premature.

Iraq's official media predictably presented the president's volte-face as the first step towards the total removal of UN sanctions.

"Today we caused a crack in the wall of the embargo and tomorrow we shall pull it down," crowed the Al-Jumhuriya newspaper.

Monday's accord allows Baghdad to sell \$2 billion (£1.3 billion) worth of oil over six months to buy the humanitarian goods and medicine that sanctions put beyond the reach of most people.

Until then President Saddam had balked at accepting what he called a "cowardly charter" on the grounds that the strict international supervision it meant would humili-

ate him and violate Iraq's sovereignty.

So in finally accepting the highly intrusive powers of UN monitors and tight control over finances and distribution, he is recognising his own weakness. But he is also gambling that Iraq's first legal hard currency earnings in nearly six years will make him stronger.

Beyond that, he hopes the arrangement is the first step to normalisation. It will certainly give other parties a vested interest in ensuring that Iraq is once again a viable trading partner. Although its permitted oil exports will be only 600,000 barrels a day — compared to 3.2 million barrels a day before the invasion of Kuwait — this will whet appetites for more.

Agreement on the terms will go some way to defusing Arab and Western concerns about the 500,000 Iraqis estimated to have died since 1990, child malnutrition, and hospital operations without drugs or anaesthetics.

It will make it harder for France and Russia to argue the humanitarian case, although the deal will reward them with trading opportunities they complained were being lost because of Iraq's isolation.

The United States and Brit-

ain, the leading hawks on the issue, risk undermining their determination to keep sanctions in place.

Washington and London insist that before sanctions can be lifted, Baghdad has to pay compensation to war victims, release all prisoners and cooperate with the UN special commission tracking down Iraq's nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

One immediate danger is that President Saddam might try to divert existing resources from illicit oil sales to finance new arms purchases. He could also increase funds for the ration system, which has helped avert a humanitarian catastrophe, but also provides a formidable means of social control.

"The imponderable is to what extent the regime, as against the people, will benefit from this," said one diplomat. "It is conceivable that what Saddam sees in it for him is not the love of the people but the fact that he'd run out of money to spend on illicit purposes."

But there is the risk that people will turn against him as the dollar strengthens, food slowly returns to the shops and expectations rise. Some discordant voices in Baghdad were wondering yesterday why it had taken so long to do the deal.

The UN's humanitarian coordinator in Iraq said yesterday that although the accord would improve living conditions, the amount of imported relief goods would be "modest".

New Zealand leaps into unknown with election

Mark Trowles in Wellington

NEW Zealand's prime minister, Jim Bolger, fired the first shots of a marathon election campaign yesterday, announcing the country would go to the polls on October 12.

The country of 3.5 million will leap into the political unknown as it elects its parliament for the first time under a proportional representation system that will favour coalition governments.

Mr Bolger told parliament his conservative National Party government, which for the past six years has built on free-market reforms enacted by Labour in the 1980s, would resist attempts to turn back the clock. "We will vigorously oppose all who seek to take New Zealand back to a failed past," he said.

Mr Bolger had to call a general election within six months to avoid a constitutional crisis and a distracting by-election in a seat where an opposition MP resigned over a local scandal.

Despite a comfortable lead in the polls, National is set to fall well short of an overall majority under proportional representation and lacks a viable coalition partner. Parties of the left are deeply split, with little prospect of forging an electoral alliance.

An opinion poll yesterday showed National and the Labour Party vying to lose ground to the New Zealand First Party, which claims "economic sovereignty" and wants to limit foreign ownership of companies to less than 25 per cent.

The poll put support for New Zealand First at 29 per cent, up seven points, compared to National, down five to 35 per cent and Labour, down three to 15. The leftwing Alliance Party was steady with 11 per cent support.

New Zealand First has soared in popularity since launching a strident campaign for cuts in immigration. It denies accusations of racist bias against Asians.

The deputy prime minister, Don McKinnon said the government would campaign on policies for an open economy, a low-rate, broad-based tax system, a free labour market, and price stability.

The announcement of an election came just two days before a tax-cutting budget in which the finance minister, Bill Birch, will unveil the treasury's latest growth forecasts.

National claims credit for a strong economic recovery that has enabled it to repay debt, cut taxes and build surpluses. But it has a battle on its hands to win acceptance of controversial health and education reforms and cut hospital waiting lists. Immigration, especially from Asia, has also emerged as an emotive issue. — Reuter.

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Court detains Arafat critic

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

A PALESTINIAN secret military court ordered the detention yesterday of a leading human rights activist who had criticised corruption and oppression in areas run by Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority.

Eyyad Sarraj, head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR), has been declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, which has called for his immediate and unconditional release.

He was arrested at his home in Gaza City on Saturday, 12 days after being quoted in a New York Times report as saying the self-rule government was "corrupt, dictatorial and oppressive".

Dr Sarraj is the respected head of a Gaza mental health project. He was arrested and briefly detained last December after criticising the authority as dictatorial.

Yesterday he appeared before a military judge of the state security court, notorious for its late-night sittings in judgment of alleged Islamist extremists.

According to the PICCR, Dr Sarraj was ordered to be detained for a further 15 days for "the continuation of interrogation procedures". No formal charge had been brought.

The Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights confirmed the detention order. The centre's director, Raji

Sourani, who is Dr Sarraj's lawyer, visited him 15 minutes before the hearing, but was not informed of its imminence. Dr Sarraj was not represented at the brief hearing.

According to a note from Dr Sarraj to Mr Sourani, the judge questioned him about an accusation of "libel and defamation" based on his comments in the New York Times.

Mr Arafat established the state security courts by presidential decree. As the centre for Human Rights commented yesterday: "They follow no due procedures, deny accused persons the right to prepare a proper defence or to have legal representation, and often the charge is not known to the defendant before he appears before the court."

"Previous trials have occurred in the middle of the night, lasting little more than an hour. The state security court defies all fair trial standards and violates basic human rights principles."

In a report on last month's bombardment by Israel, the Lebanese army claims that 147 towns and villages were targeted, some 11,000 civilians suffered material loss, and around \$16 million worth of damage was done to private property. The estimates did not include extensive damage to roads, power installations, and other public property.

The bombardment, ostensibly in response to guerrilla rocket attacks on Israel, killed around 300 civilians and drove 400,000 from their homes.

Bangladesh army brought into line

Ashraf Mahmud in Dhaka and Agencies

BANGLADESH'S president, Abdur Rahman Biswas, appeared last night to have brought the army high command under his control after about 5,000 activists of the largest political party, the Awami League, marched through central Dhaka demanding national elections scheduled for June 12 — a suspension shared by many independent commentators.

The previous day he had dismissed the popular army chief, Lieutenant-General Abu Saleh Mohammed Nasim.

The Awami League saw the general's departure as the result of a "deep-rooted conspiracy" by the president's Bangladesh Nationalist Party to sabotage national elections.

President Biswas sacked Gen Nasim for disobeying a presidential order at the weekend to dismiss two commanders suspected by the president of aligning themselves with the Awami League.

The new army chief, Major-General Mahbubur Rahman — appointed by Mr Biswas — called on the president shortly after assuming command yesterday. State television showed their meeting, at which the chiefs of the navy and air force were present.

Gen Nasim and some of his officers were under guard in a house inside the Dhaka garrison, sources said.

Diplomats said they had reports that up to 10 other officers loyal to the deposed army chief were also under house arrest, though this could not be independently confirmed.

State media said that troops who had left their barracks outside Dhaka were apparently in support of Gen Nasim and all gone back.

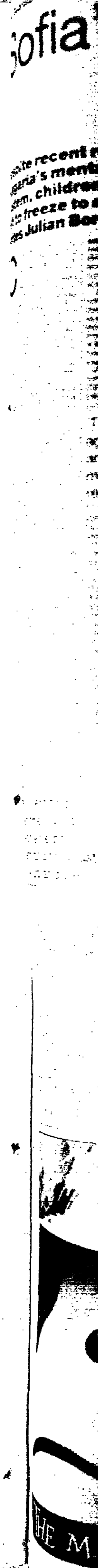
In central Dhaka there were no signs of troop movements and things appeared to be returning to normal. But there was widespread unease about the forthcoming elections.

The head of the caretaker government, Mohammed Habibur, said in a televised speech that the president had acted on his own against the officers.

Under the constitution, executive power is vested in the caretaker government.

But a controversial amendment, passed by the BNP government before it fell in March, made the president, who was elected by MPs of the BNP, commander-in-chief.

The BNP has publicly praised the president's action against the officers, parading slogans in the street like: "President Biswas don't be afraid; we are with you."



Sofia's asylums of death

Despite recent reforms to Bulgaria's mental health system, children have been left to freeze to death, writes Julian Borger in Chichil

CHILDREN in a Bulgarian home for the mentally disabled were tethered to their beds last winter and left to freeze at night when the heating was turned off to save money. Fifteen children, died as a result — victims of a threadbare and inhumane system that is only gradually being reformed.

A British volunteer nurse who visited in Chichil last August wrote a report describing conditions there as a crime against humanity. The government promised changes but they will be too late to save the children.

It is unclear how many mentally handicapped Bulgarians died over the winter in other institutions. Government officials admit conditions are as bad as Chichil in 18 other homes that have been earmarked for closure.

Sixteen months have passed since the brutal nature of Bulgaria's asylums came to light. The socialist government elected in December 1994 embarked on a series of reforms of the mental health system. Some of the worst institutions, which resembled gulags in their conditions and horrific death rates, have been closed, their inmates sent to more humane homes.

But the system inherited from communism is entrenched. Jobs and money are at stake. Reforms are hampered by a lack of funds and territorial disputes between central government and local councils.

On a visit to the Chichil home, it is easy to see how so many perished. The two-storey building is disintegrating. Plaster has fallen off the wall in great slabs and ill-fitting pieces of hardboard have been nailed up in place of missing windows.

Inside, the smell of urine and faeces is overpowering. In the main dormitory, two out of three radiators have been disconnected, and toilets are sprouting from the rotten floor. In an upstairs room, 13 teenagers with severe mental and physical handicaps lie in stinking sheets. Many show signs of malnutrition and skin disease. Several have their limbs tethered.

An emaciated girl called Valentina, aged about 16, lies with her hands tied behind her back with a length of bandage. Her spindly legs are also bound. In the bed opposite, a girl of 14 called Ekaterina sits upright looking down at her painfully thin ankles,

which are crossed and knotted together with bandages. Her arms appear too weak to brush away the flies that cover her shaven, peeling scalp.

Jenny Manson, a British volunteer nurse who last visited the home in January, said that during the winter several children were tethered to their beds and one was lying in a bed surrounded by a metal cage. The cage has since been removed.

Fenko Yonchev, Chichil's medical technician, said the children were tied to prevent them hurting themselves by

striking their own faces or falling out of bed. He said there were not enough staff for the room to be supervised constantly, so the children were often left alone.

Mr Yonchev is temporarily in charge of the home after the director's resignation last week for "personal reasons". He remembers 10 children dying between November and January, but aid workers in the region and in the capital, Sofia, insist the documented death toll was 15.

Seven came from a better-run home for younger children at Gomotarci, a few miles away. When the children turned 10 last year, the law dictated they be transferred to Chichil. Ms Manson last saw them lying unattended in an unit quarantine room. Within a few months, they were all dead.

"They were all fine when they went there," said Morag Drysdale, another British nurse working in the nearby town of Vlain. "It's the transition which is really difficult for them. No one helps them adapt and they just give up and die."

Mr Yonchev says, the children died principally because the home did not have enough money to pay for coal. When the inside temperature fell towards zero, Mr Yonchev put four children in each bed, and gave them each four aspirin a day, "to warm their bodies and keep off hypothermia".

Tanya Petkova, who is the head of social services in the nearby town of Kula, said Chichil's heating had to be turned off at night because of lack of funding from the central government. To keep the boilers running 24 hours a day would have required an extra 60 tonnes of coal, costing 120,000 leva (approximately £800).

Mrs Petkova's claims of underfunding were angrily denied in Sofia. Evgeniya Spassova, the deputy minister of Labour and Social Affairs, said less than half of Chichil's coal budget had been spent. The rest had been siphoned off for other uses.

"Money we raise in the central budget is re-allocated to



Cold and neglected... Inmates of Chichil mental home, where 15 died last winter, victims of underfunding and bureaucratic disputes. PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN BORGER

meet the needs of the local population," Mrs Spassova said.

Bulgarian aid workers in Sofia say the present labour ministry is more committed to reform than its predecessor but confirm the government is facing resistance from conservative local authorities.

After the Guardian reported the savage conditions in a camp for mentally handicapped men in Angol Voivoda in December 1994, the Bulgarian government ordered its closure and brought charges against its directors, but the local municipality

fought for more than a year to keep the camp open as a means of providing employment. It was finally closed on sanitary grounds in April this year.

The government and the local authorities in the nearby town of Kula have been aware of the conditions in Chichil since Ms Manson wrote a graphic report of a visit to the home in August 1995. "What is happening in this country regarding these young people is a crime of humanity and someone must take responsibility," the report said.

Nine months on, Mrs Spassova insists the Chichil home will be moved to another site about 30 miles away within weeks. But so far the new buildings have neither been bought nor renovated.

MacIntyre International, a British-based charity that helps people with learning disabilities, has offered to buy one of the buildings, a former hotel costing £40,000, and is currently trying to raise funds.

It is uncertain whether the children of Chichil can be evacuated before another winter descends.

Communists fight for centre ground

David Hearst in Moscow

RUSSIA'S Communist leadership is optimistic of victory in next month's presidential election, promised yesterday to pursue a programme of economic growth and moderate state regulation in which the rights of foreign investors would be respected.

The message was a clear indication that the party's leader, Gennady Zyuganov, wants to challenge President Boris Yeltsin for the middle ground of Russian politics. With many opinion polls putting Mr Yeltsin marginally in the lead, it is in the battle for the centrist vote that the campaign will be hardest fought.

To this end, the Communist Party fronted a moderate economist, Dr Tatyana Koryagina, to present its economic priorities. Dr Koryagina is a former adviser to Mr Yeltsin and works in an institute funded by the ministry of economics.

She immediately denied a spate of scare-stories in the Russian media that the Communists were preparing to renationalise the banks and conduct far-reaching changes in monetary policy. "The rights of foreign investors would be guaranteed," Dr Koryagina insisted. "They have been investing according to existing legislation, so they cannot be made victims of changes in legislation."

The Communist programme was one of "economic growth and growth of the middle class," she said. "The economic policy of [prime minister] Viktor Chernomyrdin's government is the fight against inflation, while ours is a programme of economic growth, because you can't speak about the

fight against inflation if you can't overcome the decline of production."

The present government, its policies agreed with the International Monetary Fund, has sharply cut the inflation which followed the introduction of reforms in 1992. But output has halved since 1992 and Dr Koryagina said it continued to decline in the first three months of this year.

She said her party's priorities would be to boost production in agriculture, food processing and small business. The state would also support the nuclear sector and technology. The state should have a role in regulating prices and industries providing the basic necessities for life, she said. But there would always be a place for the private sector.

"Our line would be the minimum of prohibition and maximum of permission. But the main attention will be put on help to national factories producing goods for mass consumption, for the poor and middle classes. In this sphere the turnover is very big and quick."

Asked how the Communists would fund their programme, Dr Koryagina said Russians held savings of 100-150 trillion roubles (£13-£16 billion) and the issue was how to attract them for investment.

According to her estimates, Mr Yeltsin has already allotted up to 100 trillion roubles in election promises. "Most of these promises simply won't be kept, and most of the money will go on paying [arrearages] salaries," she said.

Beside her sat the Communist Party's campaign chief, Valentine Kupstov, who denied a spate of opinion polls giving Mr Yeltsin an 8 per cent lead over his party. His own surveys put Mr Zyuganov far ahead of Mr Yeltsin, by 30 per cent to 17.

Mr Kupstov clashed with one of his main backers, Viktor Anpilov, leader of the Stalinist party Working Russia. Mr Anpilov said the Communists should make bankers do a bit of honest work "on the lathe". Mr Kupstov said: "We have disagreements with Viktor Anpilov on approaches of principle, but that does not mean the campaign is not united."

WEU dismissed in British report

David Farrell Defence Correspondent

THE Western European Union, seen by many in Brussels as the best hope of securing an integrated European defence and ultimately a European army, has been dismissed by British MPs as insignificant.

In a report* on the 40-year-old, 10-country organisation, the cross-party Commons defence committee concludes that there is almost nothing in the WEU's ability to conduct military operations, confined to the so-called "Petersberg" tasks of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief or rescue. It would accept closer links between the WEU and the EU, but does not endorse some other countries' ambition to integrate the two organisations.

● Slovaks' support for membership of Nato has cooled, with 38.7 per cent last month in favour of joining against 45.5 per cent last December, an opinion poll said.

between the European Union and Nato.

The report will be seen in Brussels as another symptom of Westminster's Euroscepticism. It is bound to cause embarrassment for British diplomats — whatever their private views — since publication coincides with the British presidency of the WEU and this year's inter-governmental conference at which the WEU's role as the military arm of the European Union will be an issue.

Britain has achieved modest improvements in the WEU's ability to conduct military operations, confined to the so-called "Petersberg" tasks of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief or rescue. It would accept closer links between the WEU and the EU, but does not endorse some other countries' ambition to integrate the two organisations.

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* Commons Defence Committee report on the Western European Union, HMSO, £11.50

Izetbegovic fears for poll

Routier in Sarajevo

BOSNIA'S president, Alija Izetbegovic, has expressed concern that the Bosnian Serb president, Radovan Karadzic, may hold a referendum to rally support for himself and disrupt post-war elections.

"He may even try to strengthen his position by carrying out a kind of referendum," President Izetbegovic said. "If it is not prevented, not only will there be no chance for fair elections, but the peace process in many of its aspects will be halted," he added.

Mr Karadzic has resisted attempts by the international mediator Carl Bildt to unseat him and remains "in the saddle", the Bosnian President, Mr Izetbegovic said yesterday.

"Obviously Mr Bildt has not succeeded in... removing Karadzic as it seemed he had two or three days ago," he said. "He has been indicted twice by a United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Mr Karadzic has refused to step down as required under terms of the Dayton peace agreement."

Mr Izetbegovic's Muslim-led government fought for independence against separatist Serbs for three-and-a-half years until the peace treaty was signed by warring factions in December.

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By Jingo for July?

Don't rule out an early Europhobic election

BY threatening non-cooperation with the workings of the European Union as a result of the continuing beef ban, John Major has taken a dangerous leap into the dark with this country's future. His statement to Parliament yesterday promised non-cooperation with a set of European partners who — whatever their own current domestic problems over the single currency — are increasingly impatient with the anti-European hysteria in this country. This was not a carefully thought out response to the genuine difficulties imposed by the beef crisis. It was an impulsively self-indulgent reaction, hastily cobbled together for party reasons after Britain's failure to get its way on beef derivatives at the veterinary scientists' meeting on Monday night. Some will say that it can be coolly ignored because it is rhetorical, designed mainly to excite the backbenches and the Tory press as the Whitson recess begins. We say that that is too complacent. Mr Major is letting loose a whirlwind which could put at hazard the whole of this country's relationship with Europe.

This of course is exactly what a growing section of Mr Major's party want. The Conservative Party, its fantasies whipped into hysteria by the right-wing press, is in an unprecedentedly fertile mood. The beef crisis has been hijacked by the Europhobes and is now being used as a lever to break the link with the EU altogether. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that some parts of the party are in the mood for war. The beef crisis has encouraged Conservative Europhobes to adopt language and attitudes which shame their party and this country and which are damaging our national interest. The anti-German mood among some MPs is an absolute disgrace. Mr Major, to his shame, has chosen not to use his authority to put an end to such talk but instead to put his authority at its service.

British policy over the beef crisis is undoubtedly in a quandary, but it is one which is of the Government's own making. The beef crisis derives directly from two long-term Conservative obsessions which were given their heads during the 1980s. The first was the encouragement of the view that all regulations, including in this case health and safety regulations in the meat industry, were a shackle on business. The second was the Conservative government's consistently servile attitude to the interests of the agricultural lobby, as opposed to consumer or environmental interests, not least through the CAP. One of the upshots was the spectacular spread of BSE in British cattle, something which the Conservatives have always belittled and failed to understand. This neglect has tainted the British meat industry, and we are all now paying the price. The European ban came years after bans by America and many other nations which went wholly unremarked by the party and the press. But the Conservatives have allowed their obsession with Europe to blind them to the logic of consumer boycotts. In this country, BSE has not yet been eradicated. Until it is, consumers will rightly be sceptical of stupid claims that British beef is the best in the world. If so, heaven help the world.

Mr Major's actions are those of a weak leader. The great danger now is that when his threats fail, he will be weaker still and allow himself to be driven by his party into even more confrontational positions against Europe. Increasingly, the logic of the Government's position takes it towards withdrawal from Europe altogether. If Mr Major means what he says, June could be the moment when the remnants of pre-Thatcherite Conservatism are finally washed away by the rushing tide of Europhobia. A jingo election in July? Don't bet against it.

Fundholders in the dock

No queue jumping but still some serious shortcomings

FOR five successive years Health Secretaries have showered praise on them. There have been six waves of fundholding family doctors. They now cover over half the population of the country — GPs with their own budgets to cover drug costs, not urgent hospital care, outpatient treatment and community services. But until yesterday there was no comprehensive analysis of their work. That is the first indictment of ministers, who not only introduced an untried and untested scheme dreamed up by Kenneth Clarke on holiday, but refused for political reasons to monitor what potentially could be the biggest change to primary health care since the NHS was launched 50 years ago. Now the Audit Commission has completed a review which shows the ministerial "success story" is full of holes.

Paradoxically, the report finds the most common criticism of fundholding — the creation of a two-tier NHS system under which fundholders' patients with lower clinical needs jump ahead of non fundholders' patients — unfounded. The fundholders are not nearly as sharp-edged and competitive as ministers hoped — or the BMA feared. There are more serious shortcomings: excessive administrative costs, poor practice in assessing general population needs, a failure to survey patient wishes or obtain feedback on hospital treatment, and an intense wariness in setting priorities. The full administrative expense of fundholding is not exposed because the widely reported £230

million only covers extra management and computer costs. To that has to be added the extra administrative costs which fundholders generate in health authorities and hospitals. One damning example deleted from an earlier leak showed one hospital trust was spending four times as much negotiating contracts with 13 fundholding practices accounting for four per cent of its income as the local health authority which accounted for 91 per cent.

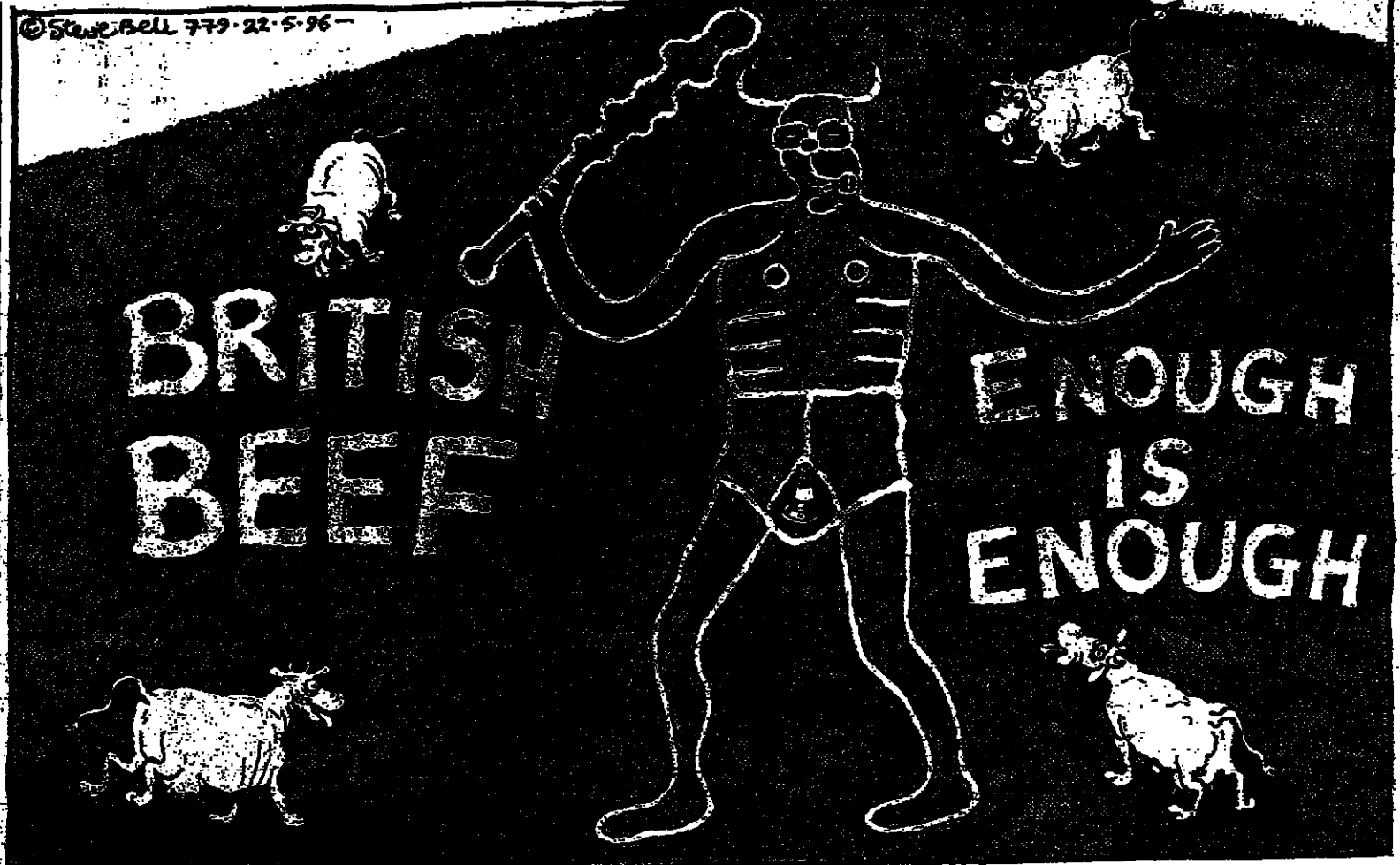
Stephen Dorrell remained unmoved yesterday. Change was non negotiable. Absurdly, he suggested it would be "a desertion of my responsibilities to turn away from the scheme". But there are a score of ways in which the current scheme could be improved. It will be a dereliction of his duty not to move. The only justification for the large additional administrative cost is demonstrative additional benefits to patients. These cannot be measured at the moment because 80 per cent of fundholders fail to seize the chance of changing the pattern of medical treatment which fundholding offers. Dorrell is right when he insists all political parties — and most professionals — have long campaigned for a primary care led health service. Fundholders have moved the NHS towards such a system as even Labour, with its alternative GP commissioning model, concedes. But Labour has no timetable for change which makes the reform of current faults — including under-spent and over-spent budgets — even more urgent.

Learning on the never-never

Labour's student loans leave a higher education shortfall

TEN years ago it would have caused a shock: Labour abandons student maintenance grants for a new system of loans. But no longer. The funding crisis in higher education is too serious — and too well known — for even the National Union of Students (NUS) to make Mickey Mouse protests. To his credit, the NUS leader welcomed Labour's plan yesterday, noting the urgent need for a fairer system of student support. Universities in the UK have moved from an elite to a mass system of higher education but failed to reform the grant system on the way. Part-timers, who now number 500,000, are still ineligible for grants as are a growing number of older students. Even the poorest traditional undergraduates is now required to cover 40 per cent of the cost of maintenance. Just because the present loan system is regressive and deters students from poorer families — as even the Conservative Political Centre concedes

— should not rule out all loan systems. Labour's proposals which were submitted to the Dearing Committee yesterday would retain a minimum earnings threshold below which people would not be required to pay and extends the repayment period from the current five to 20 years. People who would benefit would be students (with longer repayment periods); families (who no longer would be expected to make a parental contribution); and universities — as long as the £1 billion saved from existing grants was used to extend access and improve facilities. By using the National Insurance system to collect repayments, the scheme would drastically reduce current administrative costs and dramatically reduce the chance of default. Yet Labour is still ducking one uncomfortable issue: contributions to tuition fees. Yesterday's plan still leaves universities seriously under-funded.



Letters to the Editor

Tax, facts and Hanson

IF LORD Hanson (Making tracks on tax, May 20) has finished crying his crocodile tears over those poor people earning a mere £1,000 a week who cannot afford any more taxes, perhaps he could explain why the party which he supports has piled tax increases on to those on much lower incomes, even less in a position to afford them.

VAT on fuel, National Insurance rates and council-tax increases all impact more harshly on those on lower and fixed incomes, for whom they represent a greater proportion of income. The fairest tax available is a progressive income tax. A higher rate of 50 pence in the pound could be used to return some of the tax increases suffered by those on lower incomes, or to improve public services. Probably the only reason Labour has not proposed this is that they have experienced the campaign of Tory lies and distortions that would follow.

Stephen Baker, 52 Britten Court, Abbey Lane, London E15 2RS.

increased rates and coverage of VAT, or council tax. Nor should we forget the growth of charges for medicines, an expanding list of NHS treatments, and many parts of the education system. If payment for hitherto free social services is not taxation, we need to find a new word for it.

Sadly the opposition parties seem to have swallowed the bait. They could make a much more credible case for financing their programmes without increasing overall taxation. They should not feel committed to maintaining the regressive distortions which have done so much damage to our economy.

J Ball, 1 Broadlands Close, London N6 4AF.

LORD Hanson, in his fantasy on potential Conservative success at the next election, describes 550,000 a year as not being uncommon nor constituting great wealth. It's pretty uncommon round our way and if our family saw that much money between all of us we'd be celebrating.

Try working six days a week (sometimes seven) for £12,000 a year and you might get a little closer to reality. As it is, we still manage on such, and only have to worry about more elderly relatives trying to survive on £3-4,000 a year pension. Lord Hanson really does live on another world.

Robert Brascegrille, 1 Sickleholme Drive, Stonegate, Leicester LE5 5TS.

How to register a reduction in the grim toll of child abuse

THE conviction of two paedophiles for the murder and abuse of a small boy raises again the urgent need for the Government to introduce a national register of child abusers. It is a matter of fact, supported by research, that abusers of children often repeat their offences despite convictions and lengthy prison sentences.

The register would require convicted child abusers to keep the police informed of their residence and work. There would be sanctions to ensure that there was no breach of these conditions, and should the offender fail to meet the requirements then he could be brought back before the courts. I believe it would be necessary to apply these requirements retrospectively to ensure that the many abusers already convicted are brought within the system.

Access to the register would be available to potential employers. I see no legislative or administrative barrier to creating such a register, although there would be some costs in its establishment and maintenance. However, these would be minimal in comparison to the savings in human misery, and in medical and psychological help needed subsequently by the victims.

Brian Roycroft, St George's Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2SY.

to explore other ways of behaving, it is possible to develop a community experience which reduces reconviction significantly and which prevents potential victims in the future. Those working in Grendon, staff and prisoners, are not sinking beneath condemnation; they are rising above dismissal in order to protect society.

T C Newell, Governor, HM Prisons Grendon and Springfield, Grendon Underwood, Aylesbury, Bucks HP18 0TL.

YOUR report of Timothy Moss and Brett Tyler's crime and conviction (A grim fantasy that led to boy's murder, May 17) is misleading. After observing that both men fled to the Philippines following the crime, it states that attempts are being made to curtail the activities of paedophiles through the Sexual Offences (Conspiracy and Incitement) Bill.

In fact, this Bill deals only with the activities of the muscle number of sex operators who promote sex tours which conspire to facilitate or curtail the sexual abuse of children abroad. The Government has actually refused to enact legislation which would allow for the prosecution of individual paedophiles who travel independently to countries like the Philippines to abuse children sexually.

As the law currently stands, paedophiles can and do abuse children abroad, then arrive back in Britain sometimes with video evidence of their sexual crimes and, even if these tapes are discovered, face nothing more than a charge of possessing pornography. Indeed, there are many men in Britain today who are known to have sexually abused children abroad and yet face no risk of prosecution.

(Dr) Julia O'Connell Davidson, Department of Sociology, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH.

Driven crazy

FROM a case which came before Chelmsford (Essex) magistrates in November 1980: James Wilson of Stock was returning from London on what is now the A12 with his horse and cart when he passed Robert Simmons and another man driving a "break". Soon afterwards, Simmons passed Wilson and then pulled up sharply, causing Wilson to run into the back of the break.

Wilson offered to pay for any damage but Simmons refused and wanted to fight. Wilson would not fight and drove off, so Simmons and his associate pursued him, cutting at his back with their whips. At the Stamford turnpike, Wilson stopped to wash the blood off his face. Simmons also stopped and again challenged Wilson to fight. When he refused, Simmons hit him in the mouth with the butt of the whip.

Road rage is nothing new, and the historical evidence suggests that it has little to do with crowded roads or the pressures of modern life.

C J Bearman, 160 Avon Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2LA.



THE problem of road rage cannot be solved by psychological fixes any more than by technical ones (How to curb the rage, Leader, May 21). The biggest propaganda campaign in history, car advertising, has sold the myth that car use is the means to personal liberation and enhanced quality of life.

For example, motorists are stuck in a slouching position, generally boiled in summer and frozen in winter and unable to exercise to keep warm

or "let off steam". Their ability to communicate with others is massively reduced. And cars are so unmanoeuvrable and fast that they get stuck behind obstacles that are of no significance what ever to cyclists and walkers. As a cyclist, I fail to see how motorists are to be envied.

Robin P M Clarke, 9 August Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8AJ.

On the censorship debate

WILLIAM Hetherington of Housemans Bookshop (Letters, May 18) responds disappointingly to A Baron's previous letter (May 4) on his choice of stock. When did fascists and Nazis ever care about censorship? Any organisation or way of thinking which can make people afraid because of the colour of their skin or sexual orientation

tion or religious beliefs does not deserve the oxygen of publicity. It must be correct to say "No platform for Nazis". The Social Democrats in Germany made the mistake of allowing free speech and that's what led Hitler in, too please don't misquote Voltaire at me.

Malcolm Mitchell, London SE20.

Our art critics visit the V&A

HAVING lived through war and air raids, I sometimes ask myself when going through the Barbican complex: what happens when bombs fall or explode here? How can people be saved when buried under the tumbling masses of these skyscrapers? Daniel Libeskind's design for the V&A extension is for me the realisation of this nightmare.

Nicholas Topley, 22 Gainsborough Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XG.

STACKED several cardboard boxes outside for rubbish collection which I saw later had been partially crushed. I could not think what it reminded me of until I read Deyan Sudjic's article (May 20). A similar fate struck me as not inappropriate.

E T Shepherd, Oak Cottage, Stoke Close, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3AE.

Other concerns

WHAT a sense of proportion our TV supremes display. Nine days of solemn music and "tasteful programming" when a nonagenarian dies after a lifetime of wealth and privilege (With deepest regret, G2, May 20), while the slaughter of a classroom of five-year-olds and their teacher merits the postponement of a James Bond film.

JAMES Hamilton-Paton's nauseating attempt to prove that his palate is more catholic and cosmopolitan than anyone else's (Outlook, May 18) is nothing short of barbarism. Perhaps this is merely an attempt to boost your mail-bag.

A Country Diary

SOUTHERN CHILTERN: The unrelenting cold winds — as bleak from the south as they are from the north — seem to be driving spring back into winter. On high ground the cherry blossom appeared snuggled deep amongst the foliage. Bunches of embryonic oak leaves litter the ground. And bluebells — six weeks late in many places — are being so smothered by shoals of more cold-tolerant goosegrass that the flowers have the look of some submerged blue seaweed. But most species seem to be coping rather well. The local red kites, needless to say, are oblivious to the wind. They toy with it, threading their way between chimney pots and tall beeches with their forked tails doing furious ruder-work. Today I saw three floating in procession, headed to the wind, above the ridge woods south of Istone. Past them, in the opposite direction, streaked my first hobby of the year. In one of

these woods there was a plant I couldn't recognise. It was a dead-nettle of some sort, with flaccid stems more than a foot tall, and buds still tight shut. I thought I'd discovered some rare hump-nettle — until it dawned on me that the prodigy was simply a yellow archangel whose leafy growth had far outstripped that of its bearded brethren. But the most heartening adaptation was on the way home. In a spell of sunshine I spotted a group of house martins hawking for insects in the lee of a wooded, south-facing hill. There seemed to be about a score of them, but when I looked through binoculars I could see that there were uncountable hundreds. In a loose, boiling mass that stretched up to the tree-tops and away into the distance. We project our own seasonal depression workily on to the natural world. If house martins can cope with spring in the freezer, anything is possible.

RICHARD MABEY

Diary Matthew Norman

WONDERFUL news. Our old friend Derek Thompson, TV's Thommo (40), appears on five pages of Hello! magazine with fiancée Julie Corney. The pictures are fabulous (unopened presents in Harrods boxes, casually strewn around his "plush apartment" — Julie cuddling a lamb — so natural — on a racetrack), and what most touches me is TV Thommo's account of how, at Doncaster, he saw Julie for the first time. "She was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen in my life," he confides. "I was very busy so I sent my floor manager over to her with a note..." You can almost hear the theme from Love Story, can't you? We may dip further into the interview in the future. As for the wedding, although an invitation had not arrived for Stephanie — Thommo's conqueror in last summer's Great Tipster Stakes — the West Highland Terrier has no intention of being absent from Bury St Edmunds Church at 1.15 on June 22. However, the dog cannot decide what to buy the couple, since their wedding list is available only on a telephone line, at 49p per minute.

IN honour of his TV return next week, Radio Times has a 16-page section on Dr Who. One former Time Lord says he'd love to reprise the part, but is worried about the Venetian karate. "I might find it difficult kicking somebody under the chin," says Jon Pertwee.

TRANSPORT minister Shagger Morris is likely to resign this summer so he can publish his memoirs in October — and no wonder, since his advance, we learn, is £100,000. He is so pleased, in fact, that he is advising others with reputations for meanness to write their own. As for Shagger himself, the one thing said to be troubling him is whether or not to paint a full portrait of his former boss at Transport, Brian Mawhinney, as "a bumbling and indecisive buffoon".

NOTE from the TV that Gerry Adams has a glorious stunt (with which he looks a bit like a Muslim fundamentalist). We wondered if he might have been away on holiday (the Middle East is very nice at the moment), but apparently not. "He hasn't been anywhere," says the Sinn Féin press office. "He's just a nice colour." Aha.

SUCH is the frantic media demand for him, with his book now out in paperback, that Terry Major-Ball has been out of contact for a week, and I am forced to follow his activities in the newspapers. He was on the front page of the Liverpool Echo's weekend supplement, looking a touch sombre while holding a garden gnome, but in revelatory mood.

THE launch party for Terry's book Major, Major is tomorrow evening, and the Diary is torn between that event and another. For Railtrack is holding a party to celebrate its "successful" flotation at the Natural History Museum. Shareholders will be pleased to learn that the do will not threaten future dividends: it is the taxpayer who will pick up the £30,000 bill.

MEANWHILE, South-West Trains, the first railway company to be privatised, has excelled itself. It has decided to close Twickenham station this Saturday, when the Bath versus Wigan inter-code rugby match is held at the stadium. This means travellers will be able to go to the station and change trains, and can even buy a cup of tea, but will under no circumstances be allowed outside to go to the match. South-West's reasoning is so simple, it's unanswerable: because of the game, there will simply be too many passengers. Genius.

YOU GOT FIVE BEANS FOR THE COW? WELL DONE!



Telling the truth about older women

Commentary Catherine Bennett

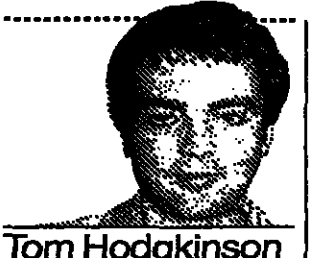
NATURALISTS, lochers and admirers of Jerry Hall, will find an unexpected treat on page 147 of the latest issue of Vogue. Here, Mrs Mick Jagger is revealed in a state of disarming disorder. Although her bra remains in place, her knickers have come adrift, and settled well below the organs of generation, a mishap which seems to cause the model nothing but satisfaction. Although the photograph has an undeniable impact on the viewer, it is hard to know why it is there, or what it is for.

Possibly Vogue is hoping to tickle the jaded palates of Sun readers who have tired of their monotonous diet of bosoms. Perhaps it wishes us to muse, à la King Lear, that unaccommodated Jerry is but such a poor, bare, forked animal. Should we marvel at the consistently voyeuristic feats of that grizzled artist, David Bailey? Or fantasise about the fulfilling home life that is Mr and Mrs Jagger? If the snap is spread only to women, it has succeeded. Under a front page headline, the Sun slobbered at "No-Knickers Jerry's Shock Photo", regretfully concluding: "It is a picture which the Sun could never print in a family newspaper." Even in the Guardian, and with its liberal ways, and considerable nudist following, reproduction of the "shock photo" would certainly lead to complaints from our more old-fashioned or shy readers.

But Vogue is at pains to present this little feast of flesh as a wholesome, healthy enterprise. The photographs of Hall, and three other semi-nude women, are introduced as a feature on "real women with real body hang-ups". Presumably female readers are meant to inspect the photographs, observe that even the bodies of models and actresses do not conform to Vitruvian standards of perfection, and feel consoling about their own physical shortcomings. When Jerry Hall admits to feeling awful when younger models go "floating around and I come out looking like a squashed sausage", the common reader imagines that this is exactly how she would feel backstage at the collections, and felicitously drops her own knickers in sympathetic sisterhood. Such public-spirited claims have become the routine justification for photo-shoots of naked women which might otherwise appear pointless, or vulgar, or even pornographic. Far from being exploitative, nudity is presented as positively admirable feminism. At last, leading models and actresses are endorsing the seventies slogan, Our bodies, Our selves!

A recent strip-show in Esquire was commended by our senior feminist, Germaine Greer. "I've been saying for some time that it would be a great help to women if men's magazines showed pictures of older women's bodies," she said. "They age much more slowly than their faces, so it might dispel young men's phobias if they actually saw what they are going to get." In Esquire, young men's phobias were dispelled by nude photographs of three actresses, none in her first, or even second youth. What could you see? Well, Felicity Kendal appeared in a body to blue pole, which concealed her primary sexual characteristics while allowing viewers to admire the impressive condition of her hips and thighs. Jane Asher, the actress and confectioner, covered her shame with a newspaper, but permitted a generous eyeful of her legs, which had clearly been plunged into

formaldehyde the last time the Beatles reached number one. Fiona Fullerton resorted to body-painting. The idea, according to Fullerton, was to prove that "one can have a thriving career and look terrific after 35". She was indignant when the pictures came out "with no copy whatsoever. No mention of actresses 'in certain age', or of why we were photographed in that way. It made no sense at all." Felicity Kendal has also grumbled that her nudity was featured "completely out of context", for all the world as if a different context would have led to her nakedness being gawped at in a quite different — medical? anthropological? — way. One feels that Kendal and Fullerton are asking a lot of Esquire and its readers. As Kenneth Clark admitted, in his classic work on the nude, "No nude, however abstract, should fall to avenge in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling..."



Tom Hodgkinson

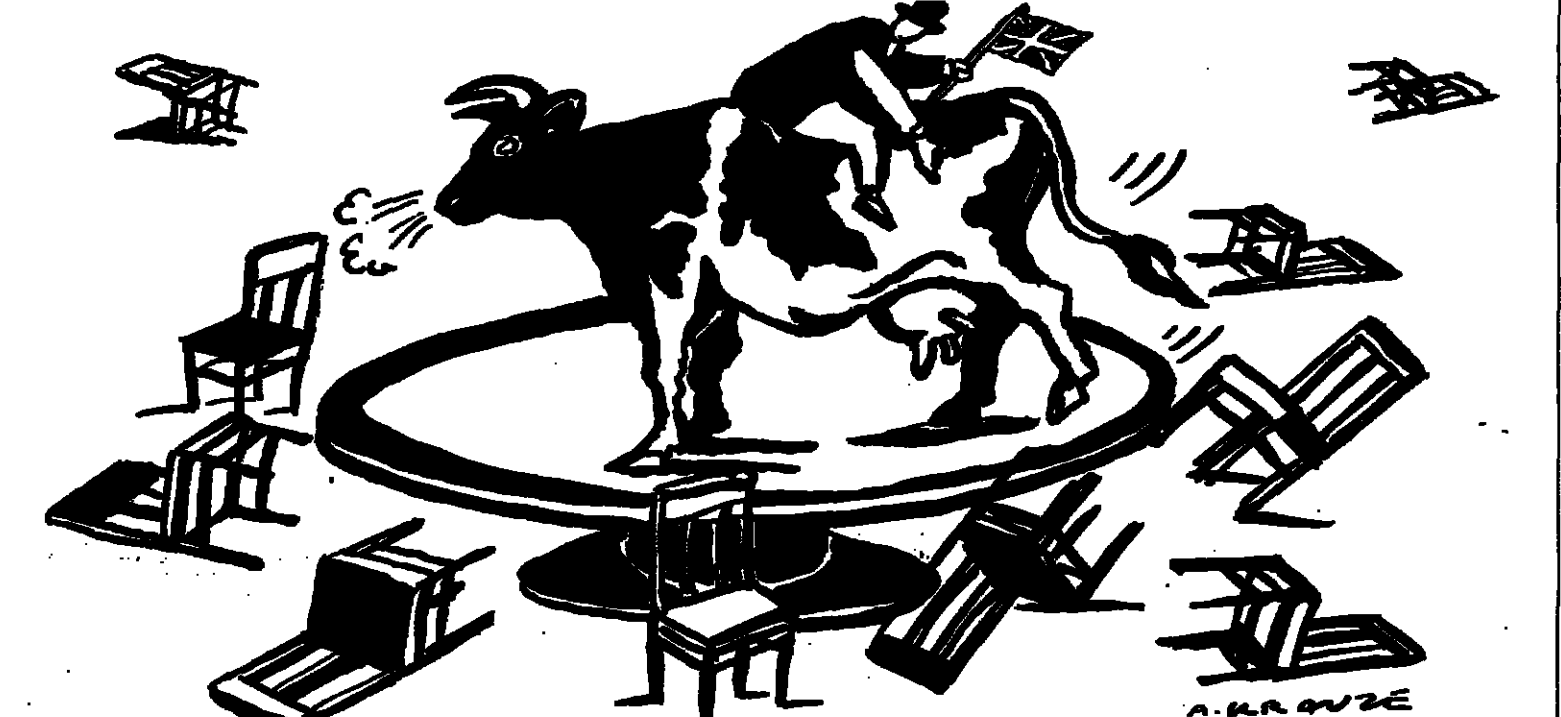
HOWEVER said that young people were apathetic and unambitious? I have just returned from a meeting with three young representatives of an organisation called the Association of Autonomous Astronauts, or AAA. Equipped with no money but a big dream, the AAA have a simple programme: space travel in the community by the year 2000. For those of you who are thinking that the idea of building a spaceship in your back yard may be taking the DIY ethic a little far, read on. These people are serious, but the solution has been to overturn "normative categories of the female body", with representations of nudes looking as nasty as possible. Others have simply given up female nudity as a bad job. Perhaps our older actresses and models should do the same? The prospect of these ageing women grinning claiming the properties of youth is neither inspiring nor dignified, but the victory equivalent of HRT. It merely confirms that it has become impossible for a woman to grow old gracefully.

all the attitudes that the AAA are trying to overturn. "As a government-funded space agency, they are organised in a very corporate, hierarchical, centralised way." Like many members of their generation, the AAA see information-sharing networking groups as the path to autonomy and freedom, in contrast to the hierarchical information-retentive work practices more common among members of the baby-boomer generation. Says John Eden: "We are opposed to NASA, because, operating under the guise of public security, whatever that is — they hide information. We don't know what weaponry exists. We find it totally abhorrent that ordinary people are paying for them, through their taxes, to go out into space and then they do not tell us what they're doing. We think that information should be shared and that's the only way to progress." But space travel for the AAA doesn't necessarily involve sending physical beings into physical space. "You can explore space just as easily plugged into the Internet," says John Eden, "or sitting in your room, meditating, starting at creating or getting your face on drugs." As the Tao text the Lao Tzu puts it: "He never looks out of his window yet he fathoms the Way of Heaven." Or, in the words of George Harrison: "Without going out of my room I can know all there is worth knowing."

SEX in space is another element of the AAA's agenda. Skeet says: "One of our hypotheses is that sex is going to be even better. That's based on certain ideas of what will happen to the body in zero-gravity conditions." In a sense, the Autonomous Astronauts' mission fits in to the tradition of pamphletising the circulation of creating more emancipatory ways of thinking. We question the divide between inner and outer space. How does it prevent us from thinking autonomously? So we're trying to explode that and create a new way of thinking about space travel and a new concept of space."

When queried on the practical progress of their mission, the AAA like to cite the example of Steve Bennett, who, on February 2 this year, successfully launched a rocket named Starliner 2 nearly 2,000 feet into the sky above the Northumberland Moors. A major component of the fuel was sugar, and the project was partly sponsored by Tate & Lyle.

The AAA philosophy is outlined in their recently released first annual report, an elegantly produced self-published pamphlet outlining the core ideas. In the report, Skeet declares an information war on NASA. NASA is the enemy because it represents



John Major versus Europe: what happens next? John Palmer argues that the EU will play for time; below, Edwina Currie (left) and Teddy Taylor assess the impact

The lone ranger

BRITAIN'S European Union partners appear distinctly underwhelmed by John Major's threat to paralyse the EU's progress is not made in lifting the beef ban. It is not difficult to see why. For all his fierce words in the Commons, Major's declarations now carry as much credibility in other EU capitals as if they had been uttered by the Grand Old Duke of York.

The specific threat to withdraw British "goodwill" in the delicate inter-governmental negotiations taking place in the Maastricht treaty review conference, will arouse more amusement than indignation. When it comes to proposals for a closer European Union, the UK government has shown precious little goodwill of any kind to date. The EU has every opportunity to underline his decision to block any serious reform of the EU institutions long before the British BSE fiasco ever became public.

The simple truth is that, as far as the future evolution of the EU is concerned, the other members have long since given up on this Government. That is why Chancellor Kohl, President Chirac and the other EU leaders are recorded as delaying a Maastricht-treaty IGC agreement until after the next British general election.

The other 14 EU governments have already begun to try and resolve their own disagreements about issues such as majority voting, more powers for the European Parliament and the future of European security and defence without worrying too much about the British. The Irish government, which takes over the six-monthly rotating presidency of the EU at the end of next month, has already pencilled in the likelihood of a full-scale IGC confrontation with the British before the end of this year.

The gameplan is to continue the talking until Tony Blair takes over in Downing Street and then begin a serious bid to finalise a compromise agreement with London by the middle of next summer. The fact that Major has now linked the IGC threat to the beef issue will change nothing in the contingency planning of the other EU leaders.

Madness to bash our partners when we could be coaxing

The chap next to me yelled: "Go for it, John!" as the Prime Minister announced his policy of non-cooperation with Europe. "Sort 'em out!" I turned to my neighbour in surprise. His constituency is on the Kent coast. His voters earn good money in tourism. If anybody gains from close links with Europe, it's him. To me, some of my Tory MP colleagues have taken leave of their senses. Here we are, with a worldwide ban on the sale of our beef. We have lost about £500 million of export business. The Prime Minister is keen to get the official EU ban lifted, and of course he is right. Both I and my Derbyshire farmers feel exactly the same way. The question is whether yelling abuse at the Europeans is going about it the right way. In my opinion it can only make matters worse and weaken our position in the long term.

We're on a rollercoaster out of the Euro-nightmare

WHEN I arrived at the Commons yesterday after addressing the Rochford NFU (following a nice British beef lunch), I gained the impression that a mighty event had occurred. Four of the new Eurosceptics rushed to meet me, one even trying to hug me, and cried: "It's fantastic... It's really going our way now." They certainly believed that the Government was now on a rollercoaster which would lead Britain out of the European nightmare. I had just assured the Rochford farmers that because of the surrender of power to the EU, the only action available to the Government was to send chocolates and flowers to the wives of the current Euro-bosses in the hope that they might be kinder to Britain a bit sooner.

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Edwina Currie and Teddy Taylor assess the impact

Edwina Currie, Conservative MP for Derbyshire South, is a member of the European Movement. Sir Teddy Taylor is Conservative MP for South East

Advertisement for Multi-pocketed Action Trousers, including product details, pricing, and contact information.

Willi Daume

Always an Olympic loser

THE MUNICH Olympic Games of 1972 evoke the memory of murder — 13 Israeli athletes and officials killed when it ought to be remembered as a peak in the life of Willi Daume, who has died aged 82. As president of the West German Olympic Committee, he kindled the idea of bringing the Games back to Germany, won the support of the International Olympic Committee, and then organised those Games to return the divided Germany to the forefront of the Olympic movement.

It was the action of the Black September terrorists, and West Germany's decision to boycott the 1980 Moscow Games, that probably dashed Daume's chances of succeeding Lord Killanin as President of the International Olympic Committee. Daume's career seemed dogged by situations not of his own making: just when he seemed en route to the podium, something got in the way.

Few other than the IOC presidents have worked so hard for sport and the Olympic Games as Daume did. A man of energy and vision, he did much to repair his country's stained image when he came into international sport after the war. From the start of the modern games in 1896, Germany had been a big player with doubtful intentions. Under Hitler, the 1936 Berlin Games became a propaganda platform for the Nazi party, and the country was blamed for its aggression in the two world wars.

Daume, patient and industrious, emulated other more

worthy German contributors to the Olympic movement — such as Carl Diem, who created the 1936 Olympic torch relay and the International Olympic Academy in Olympia, where the young mould their ideas with older Olympic philosophers. Daume never quite made such striking contributions to the movement, but he deserved to. Above all, he had a passion and understanding of youth in the struggle to modernise the Olympic movement, which some of his contemporaries lacked. His one failing was that, in 13 years as chairman of the IOC Eligibility Commission, he did not take the opportunity to stress the absurdity of some regulations in the modern sporting world. There was a sadness about the man, no better epitomised than in the Munich episode. The city won the right to stage the Games at the 1968 IOC meeting in Rome. If the IOC had doubts about giving Germany the Games so soon after the war, then it was Daume who convinced them, and that Munich should be the host city.

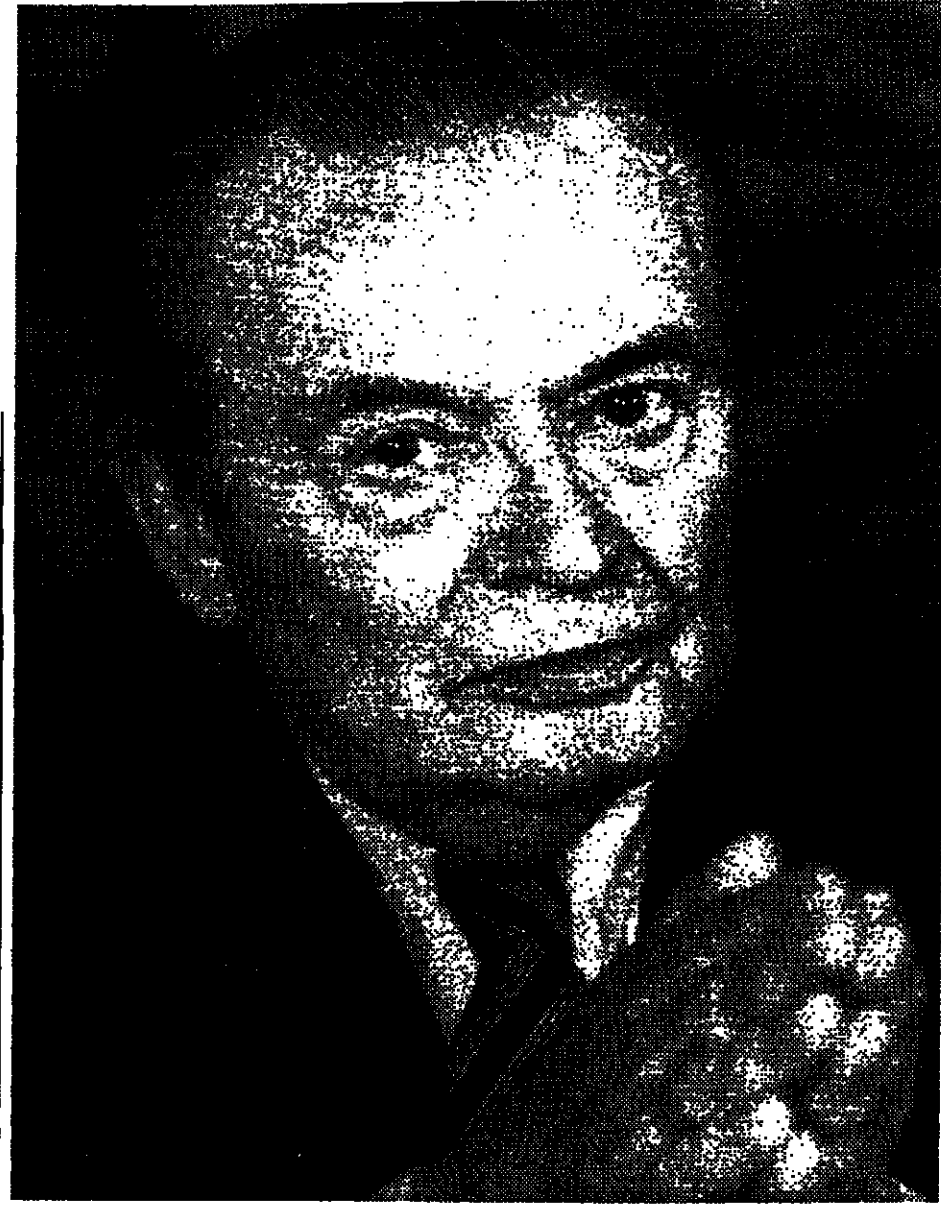
A new underground railway and an Olympic Village as the centrepiece of the arena created an exhilarating atmosphere until the dawn of September 6, when the Palestinian terrorists scaled the fencing and shed the blood of the Israeli competitors. After the tragedy, Daume's reputation suffered a further humiliation when he erroneously told a late-night IOC session that the other hostages had been saved. Now, it is a small, forgotten piece of the drama,

but for Daume — just a messenger in this case — it was the image of him carried subsequently by many of the members. Daume did, however, succeed in organising a memorial service in the Olympic Arena at 11am the following day, and at which the Munich Opera House Orchestra played.

Daume's eagerness to wipe yet another German stain from the Olympic flag was given opportunity in the winter of 1975/76, when Montreal staged the Games. Corruption, strikes and bad weather in the Canadian city brought real fears that the Games would not take place. Lord Killanin was sufficiently worried to hold secret talks with Daume and Herman Van Karnebeek, a Dutch IOC member, about staging events in Holland and Germany.

COMING to the rescue of his beloved Olympic movement might have revived Daume's fortunes, but some Canadians who had discovered the plan felt Daume was pushing to get events moved before Montreal proved unworkable. In the end, Daume's rescue plan was not needed, but it was another episode that probably damaged his campaign to become Olympic president in 1980.

The consolation prize, organising an Olympic Congress at Baden Baden in 1981, stubbed out his chance of a little glory. Congresses, when all the component parts of the Olympic Movement — IOC, National Olympic Committees and International Sports Federa-



Willi Daume... his Olympic ideals were dogged by situations not of his own making

tions — get together, are occasional gatherings. As such, it was an ideal outlet for Daume's organisational strategy, but his ambitions were foiled as, only 12 months after the boycott, it was not politic to invite Olympic people from the countries who shunned Moscow, so the Congress became a rather stunted event. Daume began his Olympic

life in the German basketball team at the 1936 Berlin Games. After the war, he served as president of the German Handball Federation for six years, then from 1950 to 1970 was president of the German Sports Confederation. It was a position that put him at the helm of post-war development, and from 1961 until his death he was head of the German

Olympic Committee. The range and depth of his contribution is shown by the fact that he served on seven IOC Commissions and was a vice-president from 1972-75.

John Rodda
Willi Daume, Olympic organiser, born May 24, 1913; died May 17, 1996

Simon Weinstock

Born to take the reins

BEING born the son of a highly successful father, with great expectations for the family, is an enormous burden for a young person. This is especially true in the world of Anglo-Saxon capitalism, where the ultimate responsibility of any director of a public company is to the shareholders, not to the founders who shaped the enterprise. Simon Weinstock, the commercial director of the General Electric Company (GEC), who has died of cancer at the age of 44, spent much of his corporate career wrestling with this problem.

As the son of Lord Arnold Weinstock, who took the wireless and TV manufacturer Radio & Allied Industries and turned it into Britain's most impressive industrial company of the post-war era, Simon had a tough act to follow.

For nearly four decades, Arnold Weinstock dominated Britain's heavy engineering and defence industries, developing and holding together a business empire during an era in which much of the edge of British manufacturing was blunted. Finding a suitable successor to take on this task and resist City pressure for GEC to spend the group's cash dividend of more than a £1 billion was always going to be difficult.

There can be little doubt that Arnold Weinstock, the Admiralty clerk turned tycoon, long entertained the idea that Simon would eventually take over the reins, in much the same way as he himself slipped smoothly into the role created for him by his father-in-law Sir Michael Sobell, the industrialist, philanthropist and racehorse owner.

There was absolutely no doubt about Simon Weinstock's competence. Both inside and outside GEC, he was seen as a young man with enormous talent, trained in the pressure cooker atmosphere of merchant bankers Sir Warburg. As commercial director at GEC, he ran one of

its most critical divisions — Marconi electronics — and did so with a great deal of flair and ability. When the experienced warhorse Arnold Weinstock sought reliable, unbiased advice, it was to his son Simon that he turned.

Simon enjoyed all the trappings of a princely upbringing denied to Arnold, the son of a Jewish-immigrant tailor from Poland. Simon's abilities quickly became apparent at school at Winchester and he won an exhibition to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he read Greats. As well as inheriting the fine mind of his father, he also shared the family passion for horse racing and opera and was as likely to be seen at Epsom or La Scala, as Lord Weinstock himself.

As Arnold Weinstock approached his 70th year, there was speculation in the financial press that Simon would take over as managing director of GEC. But the institutional investors, who were the ultimate owners of GEC, felt otherwise and GEC began a long hunt for a successor to Lord Weinstock — he emerged in March this year as George Simpson, of Lucas.

In retrospect, Simon Weinstock, who never demonstrated the ruthless ambition needed to head a public company, was probably wiser about the succession than his father, who set so much store in family and personal relationships. Had Simon survived to become part of the new, modernised Simpson regime at GEC, it is reasonable to speculate that he could eventually have risen to the very top of the company that Arnold created. Unfortunately, tragedy intervened.

Simon Weinstock is survived by his wife Laura Legh, daughter of the Equerry to the Queen Mother, Sir Francis Legh, and three daughters.

Alex Brummer
Simon Weinstock, businessman and racehorse owner, born February 24, 1952; died May 18, 1996

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Letters

Jack Wakefield writes: It was gratifying to see your obituary of Rob Hall (May 20) but it irks me that the heroism of Hall in staying up the mountain with his dying client is treated as a matter of course. Doubtless it is true that "Everest will not care who you are"; Hall's obituary is hardly the place to stake such a claim. This was a man who climbed the 14 peaks, who climbed Everest more times than any other Westerner; this was a man who watched his greatest friend die and carried on climbing; this was a man whose achievements and heroism we should respect for ever.

Jeff Cloves writes: One morning in the mid-1980s I saw Beryl Burton (obituary, May 7) racing. She was competing against her daughter Denise and struggling a bit. Her determination was undimmed, and she still looked beautiful on her bike. I met a member of the Morley Cycling Club and asked him to pass on a copy of my poem, *Beryl and her Bike*. I hope it reached her and that she was pleased to have become a muse.

Beryl on her bike
Ooh here comes Beryl such a sight
for sore cyclists' eyes
trim ankles turning blazing
lights
burning up the road
and miles ahead she shows
clean pair of wheels
to all her trailing rivals
perfect on her perfect bike
Beryl always beats the clock
pure pleasure unalloyed is
Beryl
for Beryl is the best
Beryl is the best
Beryl passes in a flash
chromey spokes Italian alloy
gleam
lovely clean machine flown by
in a dazzling blaze
yes in the pink is Beryl
for Beryl is the best
and evermore shall
be so

David Opatoshu

An actor upstaged by time

DAVID Opatoshu, who has died aged 78, was one of the very few survivors of one of the quaintest and, in its time, most active branches of the New York theatre: the Yiddish stage.

From the time Jewish immigrants swarmed into Manhattan at the end of the last century until the language ceased to be the *lingua franca* of the three million Jews living in post-war New York, Yiddish theatres occupied a swathe of the city, mainly around Second Avenue. Playhouses offered musicals, drama and the classics — "Hamlet, translated and improved by Jacob Adler".

In the theatre's latter years, the young Opatoshu was its

shining star. But he offered a promise most people knew could never be fulfilled once the magnitude of the Holocaust had been revealed — the supply of new Yiddish speakers and listeners had dried up for ever. In addition, American Jews had become totally assimilated and, more significantly, were in hugely dominant positions in the general run of showbusiness.

These facts affected Opatoshu's career even more than those of his colleagues: he was not only a promising stage actor but was having a vast impact on an industry that never really survived infancy — Yiddish film.

Unlike most people who had made their debuts on the Yiddish stage — where outra-

geous gestures were the norm, where actors' voices had to be even louder than those of the women in the front rows handing out pickled-herring sandwiches and gefilte fish to complaining children — he learned to be subtle. Paul Muni had managed it too, but went straight from Second Avenue to Hollywood. Opatoshu at first relied on the half-way house of the tiny New York studios making Yiddish films to compete with those being turned out in Poland.

Like the older Molly Picon, he had to learn how to be subtle rather than to emoté. He succeeded brilliantly with his first movie *Fishke der Lemle* ("Fishke the Lame"), which was later called *The Light Ahead*. It was about a

penniless cripple who is sought as a husband for a blind girl. Because of their infirmities, they are forced to hold their wedding ceremony in a cemetery. It could have been horrendous sentimental hokum. When I saw the film in a revival in Los Angeles 10 years ago, it was plain that Opatoshu's acting had not only lost none of its power but had effectively crossed the language barrier.

Opatoshu himself never had any barriers to cross, even though Yiddish was for him far more than a way of making a living. His father, Joseph, was a famous Yiddish novelist and he himself published a collection of short stories in the language, *Between Sea and Sand*, based on

his wartime service with the US Army Air Force in the South Pacific. But there was always the equal facility he had in English.

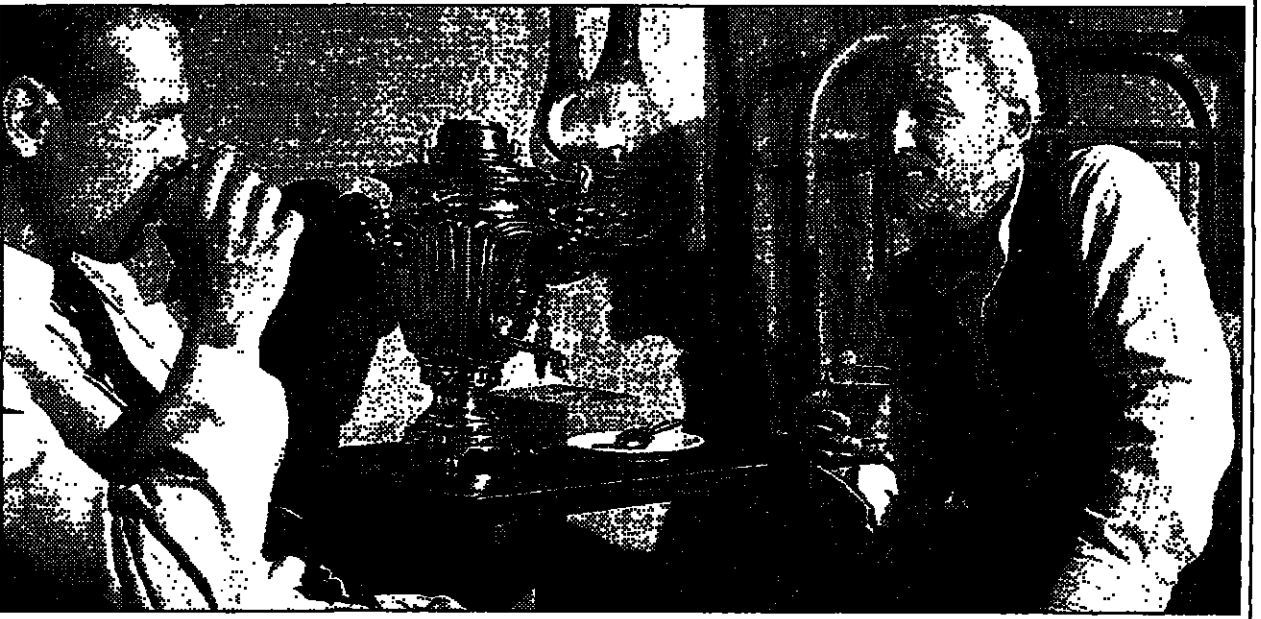
As long ago as 1938, the year before *Fishke*, he had made his Broadway debut with the famous Group Theatre, appearing in their productions of Clifford Odets's *Golden Boy* and *Night Music*. He went on to star in stage musicals including Cole Porter's *Silk Stockings* and *Bravo Giovanni*, comedies such as *Me and Molly*, *Reclining Figure* and *Once More With Feeling*, and the moving story of the Warsaw Ghetto, *The Wall*.

The experiences of *Fishke* put him in good stead with Hollywood, although there was always the touch of the Yiddish actor in his movies, particularly in *The Naked City*, *Torn Curtain* and, memorably, *The Ficer*. But his finest role in any medium was undoubtedly as Akiva, the Irqun terrorist leader, in Otto Preminger's *Exodus*.

It was the only perfect acting performance in that over-long, over-hyped movie (when he saw the film, the comedian Mort Sahl called over to the Director: "Otto, let my people go!") Opatoshu, looking years older than his actual age of 42, with all the sadness and anxiety of the fight he had supposedly waged etched into every pore, was brilliant for the few moments he appeared on screen. The shame is he had so few opportunities to equal it.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, his son, Dan, and three stepchildren.

Michael Freedland
David Opatoshu, actor, born January 30, 1918; died April 30, 1996



Brief but brilliant performance... David Opatoshu with Paul Newman in Exodus

PHOTOGRAPH BY KOBAL

Jackdaw



Snoopy chest

ON A sunny spring afternoon, Dr Barry Weintraub, a trim and tan New York plastic surgeon, was poking his patient in the eye with a small stick. "You see, here, you're getting hooding," he said, pushing a plastic surgical pointer into the woman's eye. "The upper eyelids are drooping. And these," he said, pulling at the lids, "these lower lids are puffy." The patient lifted a mirror to her reflection. "Remember what you were like when you were a kid?" the doctor said, his voice wistful.

The woman nodded, glumly remembering the

clear, wide eyes of her youth, before the vagaries of New York left her with what she now saw were — there was no denying it — squinting, sagging sockets. "Well, guess what?" said the doctor's modulated voice. You can have those eyes again.

"I try not to discuss money with my patients," explained Dr Weintraub, his blue eyes notably unsmug, his tan face firm as a not-quite-ripe honeydew melon. "It's just another issue totally, and it's sort of ugly." So Dr Weintraub's svelte brunette office manager led the patient into another office.

Ten minutes later, the patient left with an estimate: \$8,000 to nip and tuck her upper and lower lids, a price that included the services of an ophthalmologist, surgery at a plush clinic in a Beaux-arts mansion on East 69th Street and nursing visits.

"We could also talk chin lips," called Dr Weintraub from the office door as he waved farewell and the sun was setting over the blossoming pear trees of Park Avenue.

Then again, at age 28, she probably couldn't afford it. The New York Observer reporting on surgeons sharpening their scalpels for young professionals, (mostly women) who apparently see plastic surgery as empowerment. Like yoga, carrot juice or spinning classes. (Snoopy brags in Dr Weintraub's term for breasts flattened with age.)

Lemmy's line

THERE'S an old Irish saying: "It doesn't matter who you vote for, you always end up with the government."

Lemmy of *Moscowhead* gives us his view of politics in RIP.

Girls Who Do It

- TOP TEN Reasons Why You Should Sleep With Your Fella.**
1. To see if you like sleeping with boys; you may be a lezza.
 2. If you're lucky you might earn a "bad reputation" and all the sixth formers will ask you out 'cos they know you go down.
 3. The more you do it, the more experienced and better

prepared you'll be when you become a groupie.

4. You can join the special club for girls Who've Done It, and they will let you hang around with them in the girls' bog during double maths where you can smoke fags and that.
5. Human biology will become a breeze. After all, practice is better than theory.
6. Established non-virgins don't need to bother anymore about fussing over their appearance. Have a look around you, see how popular that (insert school slut's name) is with the boys, even with her growing-out perm and tide-mark foundation. Yup, she does it alright.
7. Some poor fool might think it means you love him, and will buy your lunches for you and save the seat beside the radiator in Geography, do your English essays etc.
8. You will avoid years of whingeing and whining and pleading and begging and the insult of being called "frigid" that the other girls get.
9. If your headmaster gets wind of your early initiation, he may send you to see a

therapist for counselling, hopefully during those boring economic classes.

10. Cos life's too short. Be safe out there...

Advice from Jane magazine, the one that anti-porn MP Peter Luff did not get hold of.

Brain bore

CONSIDER the following case: A brain in a vat is at the wheel of a runaway trolley, approaching a fork in a track. The brain is hooked up to the trolley in such a way that the brain can determine which course the trolley will take. There are only two options: the right side of the fork or the left side. There is no way to derail or stop the trolley, and the brain is aware of this. On the right side of the track there is a single railroad worker, Jones, who will definitely be killed if the brain steers the trolley to the right. If Jones lives he will go on to kill five men for the sake of thirty orphans (one of the five men he will kill is planning to destroy a bridge that the orphans' bus will be crossing later that night).

One of the orphans who will be killed would have grown up to become a tyrant who made good, utilitarian men do bad things, another would have become John Sununu, and a third would have invented the pop-top can.

If the brain in the vat chooses the left side of the track, the trolley will definitely hit and kill another railroad man, Lettie, and will hit and destroy ten beating



RIP... Lemmy talks!

hearts on the track that would have been transplanted into ten patients at the local hospital who will die without donor hearts. These are the only hearts available, and the brain is aware of this. If the railroad man on the left side of the track lives, he too, will kill five men — in fact, the same five men the railroad man on the right would kill. However, Lettie will kill the five as a consequence of saving ten men; he will inadvertently rush the ten hearts to the hospital for transplantation. A further result of Lettie's act is that the busload of orphans will be spared. Among the five men killed by Lettie is the man responsible for putting the brain at the controls of the trolley. If the ten hearts and Lettie are killed by the trolley, the ten prospective heart-transplant patients will die and their kidneys will be used to save the lives of twenty kidney-transplant patients, one of whom will grow up to cure cancer and one of whom will grow up to be Hitler. There are other kidney and dialysis machines avail-

able, but the brain does not know this.

Assume that the brain's choice, whatever it turns out to be, will serve as an example to other brains in vats, and thus the effects of its decision will be amplified. Also assume that if the brain chooses the right side of the fork, an unjust war free of war crimes will ensue, whereas if the brain chooses the left fork, a just war fraught with war crimes will result. Furthermore, there is an intermittently active Cartesian demon deceiving the brain in such a way that the brain is never sure if it is being deceived.

Question: Ethically speaking, what should the brain do? Justify your answer. From *Brain in Vat* in *BOING BOING*.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171 713 6866; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 112 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

1520 2010

to take
ins

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Treasury admits growth target cannot be hit

Larry Elliott in Paris

THE Treasury is set to cut its forecast for UK growth this year after accepting that the rapid slowdown in Europe has made its Budget forecast of 3 per cent expansion unachievable.

With the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development set to downgrade its UK projections for 1996, the Chancellor will unveil more modest expectations himself in his summer economic forecast on July 2.

The OECD, already far gloomier about the outlook for gross domestic product this year than the Treasury, is expected to trim its UK forecast from 2.4 per cent to around 2 per cent next week.

While its annual health check of the UK will praise the Government's structural reforms, the OECD will warn that the increase in the Budget deficit caused by slower growth will mean tough decisions for the Chancellor in the run-up to the election.

"I think that will stress that any tax cuts in November will have to be matched by equivalent spending reductions in the public expendi-

ture round currently underway.

The Chancellor Kenneth Clarke has already warned Cabinet colleagues that his Budget strategy depends on their fiscal prudence, and may welcome the OECD's call for budgetary caution.

Although the Chancellor now accepts that the sluggish start to 1996 makes his Budget forecast over-optimistic, he will stress that growth in the second half of the year should be running at an annualised rate of close to 3 per cent.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Angela Knight, said low taxation, control of public spending and low inflation were essential for sustained growth, but were not enough in themselves to trigger a sustained fall in joblessness.

"Unemployment benefit systems must work with the grain of the market. Benefit payments must not undermine the incentive to work. Receipt of unemployment benefit must be conditional on recipients looking for work."

The Government's approach is likely to receive another boost from the OECD in July, when a special study will support ministers' claims

that those on low earnings in the UK often move up the income ladder over time.

An investigation of eight OECD members over a five-year period found that there was considerable mobility in earnings.

The update of the Jobs Study produced two years ago said Britain and New Zealand — the two countries that have most closely followed the OECD's prescription — were those where the unemployment performance had improved the most.

Fears that inflationary pressure was being stored up in the economy were fuelled by the latest official figures for the total amount of money in the system, Sarah Riley writes.

The Bank of England's broadest measure of money supply, which includes bank and building society lending, rose by a seasonally adjusted 0.6 per cent last month bringing the annual growth rate to 10 per cent against 9.8 per cent in March.

This was above the Government's monitoring range of 8-9 per cent for the sixth month but was lower than City expectations. It reflected a rise in M4 lending of £4.2 billion in April.

CBI calls on Prime Minister to curb Euro-sceptic wing

Keith Harper

SERIOUS rifts between British business and the Government were opened last night when the Prime Minister was emphatically instructed by CBI leaders to curb the increasingly shrill Euro-sceptic wing of his party who were accused of living in worse than "cloud-cuckoo land."

Responding to Mr Major at the CBI's annual dinner, its outgoing chairman, Sir Bryan Nicholson, said: "In this pungent atmosphere of romantic nationalism and churlish xenophobia, I sometimes wonder if there are some among us who have failed to notice that the war with Germany has ended."

Sir Bryan was reflecting the opinion of many senior business leaders who are openly voicing their frustration at the antics of the Tory party and the impact it is having on their dealings with Europe.

Individual companies were last night threatening to follow Sir Bryan's example and protest to Mr Major. Many of them take the view that any chance of the Tories winning the election will be blown away if they persist with anti-European vehemence.

Sir Bryan said: "References to cloud-cuckoo land are near the mark — but I am not sure they are strong enough. This spring seems to have brought forth a flock of cuckoos which are about as helpful as the biblical plague of locusts."

Guests at the dinner said they had never heard a CBI leader deliver such an open criticism of the party big business traditionally supports.

Sir Bryan said he was appalled by the standard of debate over Europe. "Some of our parliamentarians conduct themselves with a discourtesy that can only serve to embarrass and alienate those of us with a large and increasing num-

ber — who do business with our European partners."

Sir Bryan went on: "We are told the Brits need to stand up to Chancellor Kohl or he will continue ripping them off. Europe means Britain v Germany."

The CBI president argued that membership of the EU was not compatible with operating in the global market. As a trading nation, we were dependent on access to emerging markets and this argued strongly for our membership of the EU rather than against it.

Sir Bryan's speech was quickly supported by the TUC general secretary, John Monks, who said: "At last British business realises the damage these Tory Euro-sceptics are doing. Their petty nationalism threatens jobs, investment and business competitiveness."

Mr Monks said: "Anyone who thinks that Britain can turn its back on Europe is just plain daft. We can't go it alone."



IN AN effort to convince technophobes that surfing the Internet is so simple it can be done standing on one leg, David Gosling took both keyboard and surfboard and rode the rollers in London's Oxford Street yesterday.

Mr Gosling and partner Stuart Tidy have set up the Anglo Corporation to offer the curious access to the worldwide web.

Debenhams branches. A session costs £3 for 30 minutes. Leaving the surfboard somewhere after the demo was no problem either. Mr Gosling's father founded NCP car parks.

Russia seeks to join think tank

Larry Elliott reports
OECD officials 'embarrassed' by Moscow overtures

BORIS Yeltsin yesterday sought international backing ahead of next month's knife-edge presidential election when he launched an audacious bid for Russia to become a member of the West's leading economic think tank.

Officials at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development were taken completely unaware by the overture from Moscow and admitted that they were "slightly embarrassed" by the move.

The 27-member OECD, meeting in Paris, welcomed Mr Yeltsin's request as a sign of his commitment to democracy and free markets.

But they made it clear that Russia's enormous economic problems meant it would be years before the former communist superpower was fit to join the so-called "rich man's club".

They said Russia had carefully timed the application to coincide with the opening of the OECD's two-day annual ministerial meeting. It would not be rejected that it would be rejected that of hand.

The formal application for membership was handed to the OECD's secretary-general, Jean-Claude Paye, by Yuri Iriy, the Russian Federation's

ambassador to France, on Monday night and was relayed to ministers yesterday.

Austrian Chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, who is chairing this year's ministerial talks, said Russia's move was an "important step" adding that closer co-operation would help to ensure economic stability and peace.

However, he stressed that Russia would have to convince the West that it had fulfilled a set of tough criteria before it could follow other members of the Warsaw Pact into the OECD.

The formal process to start negotiations with Russia will depend on the go-ahead from the OECD's council of ministers and the possibility that the communist challenger Gennadi Zyuganov may oust Mr Yeltsin means this will not happen until after the election.

OECD officials said privately that the timing of the Yeltsin approach was an obvious election ploy designed to highlight the dangers of the country turning its back on the reform process.

But they added that Moscow has been chastened by the success of its former satellites in being admitted to the list of developed industrialised nations and wanted to show the Russian public that it was not languishing behind.

The Czech Republic and Hungary have already joined the think tank, and Poland and Slovakia are expected to swell the ranks within the next year.

April blow to recovery as mortgage lending falls

Margaret Hughes
Personal Finance Editor

HOPES of a sustained recovery in the housing market have been undermined by figures released today which show that mortgage lending by banks and building societies fell in April.

But lenders who attribute the downturn to the Easter holiday period remain optimistic that the modest recovery will be maintained in the months to come.

Figures published by the Building Societies Association show a 6 per cent fall in gross advances since March to £3.24 billion, while net advances — which exclude remortgages — were down by almost 20 per cent at £280 million.

Mortgage approvals, which indicate underlying demand, were more than 3 per cent down at £3.64 billion. However, on a seasonally adjusted basis, lending and approvals show a rise on March and are well up on a year ago.

Separate figures from the British Bankers' Association show that bank mortgage lending fell in April to £256 million from £262 million in March, at a time when consumer credit generally was sharply up.

Confirmation of a gentle housing market recovery came from the Inland Revenue which said 93,000 homes changed hands in April on a seasonally adjusted basis, up from 90,000 in March.

Minder fails to get the message

Users fume at BT answer service, as Nicholas Bannister reports

CUSTOMERS of British Telecom's Call-Minder service are ringing in and finding no one at home. The service, launched last year, has proved so popular that the system set up to handle it has been overwhelmed.

Callers find they are unable to leave messages while customers are often unable to check if any messages have been left. One irate subscriber said: "The line's been engaged all the time. I've been paying for this service and it's not working. No one at BT has written to say why this is happening and what they are doing about it."

BT is installing extra capacity but it won't be in place for another month. A BT spokesman admitted that people were experiencing problems with Call-Minder as a result of the "huge success" of the service, which costs £5 a quarter. "It has been taken up by more people than we expected," he said.

BT is increasing the number of computers handling the service from 21 to 37 after 300,000 clients subscribed.

Call-Minder, which was launched in May last year, does away with the need for an answerphone machine. Messages are stored on the

network's computers and — in theory — can be retrieved from anywhere by keying in a pre-arranged code.

BT is hoping not to make the same mistake with its latest product a pager which will also keep people in touch with events and scores during the Euro 96 football championship. The group is planning to test the concept during the tournament.

The plan is that customers will buy the EasyReach pager outright for about £110, with people paging the owner effectively paying for the service. Owners will then be paged several times a day with an update on the championship.

But the scheme could backfire if it runs into the capacity problems encountered by Call-Minder. It will find few friends if all it does during England's key matches is allow the boss to call you back to the office.



The Old Lady joins move to make City a green force

Roger Cowe

THE Bank of England is joining the Corporation of London in setting up a powerful Environment Forum which aims to make the City a centre of green expertise.

Bernard Hart, corporation clerk and chamberlain, told a meeting yesterday: "We want to see the City taking the lead, both in improving the physical environment locally and in working out the implications for financial institutions of environmental issues."

Discussions were under way with firms representing City activities from accounting to banking. Mr Hart said: "The Bank of England is very keen. We are in the process of putting together a group, which should be set up in the next few weeks."

He announced the creation of the forum at an international meeting in London on insurance and the environment.

The insurance industry has been in the forefront of business concern about environmental dangers such as global warming, because of the huge insurance losses which have arisen from unusual climatic events such as hurricanes and floods.

Banks, meanwhile, have been concerned at the potential liabilities arising from contaminated land, while other sectors of the financial and legal community are also keen to exploit the business potential.

Notebook

Beef battle could cost Major the war



Edited by Alex Brummer

IT is disagreeable enough that so many Tory backbenchers are willing to fight a third world war over British beef without the Prime Minister allowing himself to be dragged into the trenches with threats to put the business of Europe on hold.

Sure, it is sad if EU leaders failed to deliver on undertakings made at Downing Street for a limited lifting of sanctions. But, by drawing a line in the sand now, Mr Major risks alienating the bulk of his Government's support among businesses.

The remarks of its president, Sir Bryan Nicholson, at last night's CBI dinner — where he attacked the "pungent atmosphere of romantic nationalism and churlish xenophobia" being whipped up on the back of issues such as beef and the Euro-currency — is typical of the deep-seated concerns now being heard among some of Britain's most successful enterprises.

Marks & Spencer, which has successfully broken into the European retailing market, with turnover up 13 per cent to £407 million in 1995, makes it clear that it will be involved in currency union whatever the Government decides. It regards reports that the chancery to the Euro would cost it £100 million as wildly inaccurate and intended, like so much else, to distort the European debate.

Even some of those corporations, like British Airways, which Mrs Thatcher put into the private sector, have become increasingly fearful of the unchecked anti-European debate. The company's chief executive, Robert Ayling, is among a group of senior business leaders prepared to lobby the Government over the build up of anti-European sentiment.

These business leaders are appalled at the misjudgement of the Cabinet which now appears willing to put the single European market and Britain's place in a future monetary union at risk, simply because the authorities were unwilling to act boldly when the beef crisis first broke. Had more radical decisions been taken to deal with the safety issue then the current unseemly imbroglio might never have taken place.

play unless it settled down and focused its activities.

Ospeil clearly seeking to put some order into SBC's operations. The company is being divided into four separate entities: one focused on the domestic Swiss economy, another on what the Swiss do best in private banking — investment banking in the shape of SBC Warburg and fund management through SBC Brinson.

This gives some clarity to the lines of control within the group although it is interesting to note that risk control, perhaps the most sensitive area inside SBC Warburg given the nature of derivatives risks, has been switched out of the investment bank into the corporate centre. Gradually it would seem that power at SBC Warburg, once the UK's most powerful merchant bank, is being switched to Basle.

The new structure would make it easier — should Mr Ospeil decide for part of the group to be floated or merged with a global competitor if that were deemed necessary in what has become a destabilised Swiss banking sector.

Trade spat

ANOTHER year, another row between Brussels and Washington over trade. Every year, the annual meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is marked by the most almighty spat over a relatively innocuous aspect of the multilateral trading system.

This year the row is about Cuba, with even Britain joining the international outrage at America's decision, following the downing of a US civilian jet, to announce draconian sanctions against any international companies that do business with the Castro regime.

The rest of the OECD believes, rightly, that the move has less to do with trade than it has with Bill Clinton's reelection prospects. Florida is a key battleground state and contains large numbers of right-wing Cuban emigres who have put pressure on the White House to retaliate.

Clinton's response has been the ultimate example of taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The US is threatening to revoke visas to executives whose companies do business with Cuba, take action against firms that occupy premises on the island that were confiscated by the Castro regime and refuse entry to the US market for foreign enterprises dealing in Cuban sugar.

Even worse, Washington is now threatening to expand the scope of its action to Libya and Iran, where Western interests are even more extensive than they are in Cuba. However, as the UK trade minister Anthony Nelson said yesterday: "You don't hurt your enemies by hurting your friends."

With Clinton set to win in November, the president ought to stop acting like Pat Buchanan and recognise the danger his unilateral action poses to free trade.

Gnome power

THE new group chief executive of the Swiss Bank Corporation, Marcel Ospel, has lost no time in stamping his authority on the country's third banking force. After the strange mating dance between UBS and Credit Suisse earlier this year, he has assumed that SBC could be put into

Defeated Swissair fights back in battle for duty-free store group

THE fight to buy the duty-free businesses of department store group Alders turned nasty last night when the defeated bidder, Swissair, revealed it had offered more for the business than BAA.

In a statement, released after the stock market had closed, Swissair said it wanted its offer put to Alders shareholders so they could decide which was the better offer.

Swissair said it had offered £145 million for the chain, against the £130 million Alders accepted from BAA, and would be speaking to Alders' institutional shareholders ahead of the extraordinary general meeting called to approve the deal. It also said it would be "encouraging"

Alders to put its rival offer to shareholders.

David von Simson, managing director of Swissair's advisor SBC Warburg, said: "We feel that since Swissair is prepared to pay £145 million, against the £130 million offered by BAA, that shareholders should have a chance to decide between the two."

Alders insisted that its board had acted "in the best interests of shareholders."

A spokesman said: "We negotiated with BAA in good faith, with the full knowledge of Swissair's position, and obtained a firm agreement from BAA with no strings attached."

It is believed that Swissair, which was front-runner for several weeks to buy the business, had attempted to attach conditions which Alders was not prepared to accept.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.85	France 7.6050	Italy 2.306	Singapore 2.08
Canada 1.54	Germany 2.225	Japan 154	South Africa 6.35
Denmark 8.74	Greece 360.00	Netherlands 2.52	Spain 17.50
Finland 7.055	Hong Kong 11.41	New Zealand 2.1590	Sweden 10.07
	India 52.85	Norway 9.72	Switzerland 1.9425
	Ireland 0.54	Portugal 232.50	Turkey 111.676
	Israel 4.95	Saudi Arabia 5.85	USA 1.4775

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)

Call for inquiry into operator's hold on Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted hits shares • Support for new £3.5bn Thames Estuary airport

MPs challenge airports monopoly

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

SHARES in the airport operator BAA slipped yesterday after the publication of an influential Commons report questioning its monopoly hold over Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports.

The privatised company — formerly the British Airports Authority — runs the three major airports serving London which together handle some 70 million passengers a year — 97 per cent of all those in the South-east and almost two-thirds of all passengers in Britain.

But yesterday, in a report on UK airport capacity, MPs criticised BAA's position in London before and found it to be "in the national interest".

He said the real crux of the Select Committee's report was the need to take full advantage of London's runway capacity in order to beat off competition from Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris. "If we don't make better use of our aircraft capacity in London then they will, which will harm our economy".

This was the reason for the proposed Terminal 5 at Heathrow, he said. A report from the MMC relating to BAA's pricing policy at its South-east services is expected on June 10.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission to "re-examine whether BAA should remain, in effect, the monopoly provider of airport services in the South-east or whether Gatwick and Stansted should be owned and operated separately from Heathrow."

It said the question should be addressed in the five-yearly review of BAA's regulatory framework for the period beginning April 1997.

Among other recommendations they called on the Government to draw up a strategic airports plan — producing a White Paper within two years — and to promote domestic rail as an alternative to short-haul flights. Improved planning procedures for airport development was necessary to replace the current "slow, unwieldy and uncertain" process, and "adversarial" public inquiries.

At Heathrow, they recommended better utilisation of the airport by maximising existing runways, as well as higher landing charges which could be used to fund better public transport access, environmental improvements and noise reduction measures.

In addition, a proposed new £3.5 billion airport in the Thames Estuary could be the long-term answer to the growing problems of congestion at existing airports. Such a scheme "should not be ruled out if demand for airport capacity in the South-east is predicted to be substantially higher than could be satisfied by a single runway serving the region", the report said.

The committee said that BAA had performed impressively in building up Gatwick, and it recognised that capacity at Stansted could not have been developed as rapidly as it has without the profits from the two other London airports. But it added: "A company that owned Stansted and Gatwick might be keener to attract traffic from Heathrow, and the separate owners of Heathrow would have every incentive to develop its capacity as far as possible. There would thus be two companies with an incentive to provide capacity to meet demand."

Shares fell 17p on the day, closing at 507p.

Forget the booze cruise, here comes the cross-Channel drink link — courtesy of Richard Branson

Simon Beavis in Brussels

RICHARD Branson yesterday threatened to challenge the rules banning duty-free sales on cross-Channel trains as he helped launch a package of cheap fares on Eurostar.

Mr Branson, whose Virgin Group is a part of the London & Continental consortium set to take over the running of Eurostar services next month, plans to run return trains to Lille for duty-free shoppers. He said: "We're going to introduce the trains to show how stupid the rules are."

Airlines are still free to sell duty-free on flights to and from Brussels and Paris. They will continue to do so until the end of 1998 even though the right was supposed to have ended when Eurostar trains began running.

The move came as a new £49 Eurostar return fare to Paris and Brussels was unveiled alongside plans to run daily direct services between London and Disneyland Paris. Both will start from the end of June.

A family of two adults and two children will pay £196 to go to Disneyland and back in trains that would have special entertainment for children. The incentives have been put forward in an attempt by London & Continental to more than double traffic in the Eurostar trains in the next two years. The group wants to boost the number of passengers from 3.25 million last year to about 8.5 million in 1998, when London & Continental is aiming for a stock market flotation to raise finance to build a fast-link railway service from London to the Channel Tunnel.

If it fails to meet volume targets, the flotation could be delayed by up to two years, threatening a delay in the completion of the link in 2002.

Marks puts on yet another solid show

From the boardroom to the high street, Roger Cowe finds a buoyant M&S

SIR Richard Greenbury, the solid, robust chairman of Marks & Spencer, personifies the company which dominates Britain's high streets. That it is solid and robust is shown by yesterday's strong results, the latest in a series despite the travails of weather and competition.

And Sir Richard dismisses critics as effortlessly as M&S fend off competitors. The chairman yesterday flicked away any suggestion of weakness, blaming either the media or the City, or both, for getting the facts wrong. A crisis in women's outerwear? Nonsense. Trouble at the works council? Balderdash. Too much competition in food? Rubbish.

It is certainly true that M&S has both an impressive record and an immensely strong position. Profits last year would have broken the magic £1 billion barrier but for extra pension costs. Over the past five years, sales have grown by more than a quarter, profits by almost two-thirds, and the dividend by 70 per cent.

In that period it has built up a substantial financial services business as well as expanding abroad so that 19 per cent of sales and 13 per cent of profits come from outside UK retailing. The group has net cash of more than £1 billion.

That is a tough act to compete with, but it does not mean the giant is impregnable. There could be some minor cracks in the edifice.

First, clothing. M&S has the best sites and the biggest market share, which give it huge advantages over its rivals both in buying and in getting people into the stores.

It also has tremendous strength in buying teams and systems, which tends to get the right things in the shops more often than rivals do, plus a powerful brand, in the broadest sense, and the best staff, both of which give shoppers confidence to buy.

All that doesn't leave much scope for cracks. But M&S, like its chairman, is getting on a bit in style and fashion stance. Traditionally, it does not do as well in more spend-thrift and fashionable times. Also, rivals such as Burton and BHS have recovered over the past couple of years, so are more likely to take sales. There is the hint of a crack.

In food, the chain occupies something of a niche as an up-market retailer of pristine produce and chiller-ready meals. It has maintained market share, but the niche is increasingly being invaded by the top supermarkets. Just to prove the point, Tesco recently recruited a whole buying team from M&S.

As with food, a serious rival — in the shape of Waitrose — has bounced back in the past year from a dismal trough and is now a more substantial competitor in the important south east region.

So there are a couple of tiny cracks. But there is also plenty of Polyfilla, in the form of diversification as well as core strength.

Financial services is one example of the group's successful diversification, with nearly four million charge-card accounts handling a quarter of store sales, more than £500 million in personal loans and a growing business in insurance and pensions.

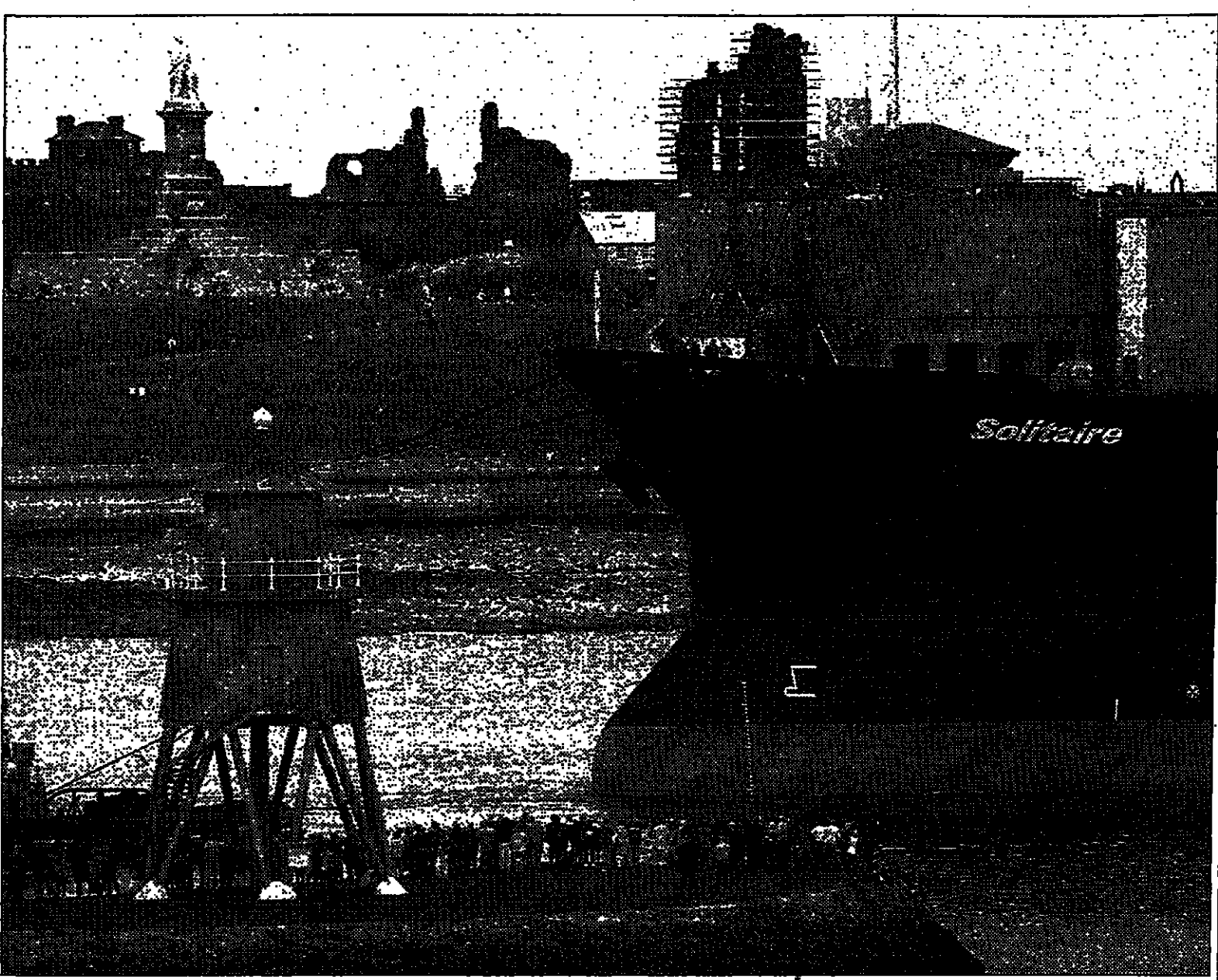
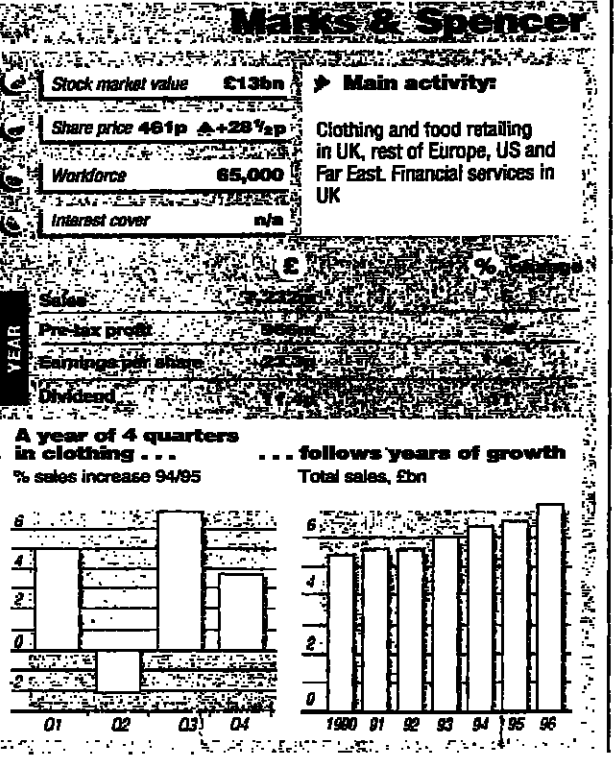
INTERNATIONAL business is an example of less successful diversification. Last year M&S sold D'Almeida in Canada to extricate itself from one long-running disaster, but of the rest, only Hong Kong shows the kind of profits the group must expect.

Brooks Brothers in the US has finally shown some improvement, but with less than £11 million profit on £296 million sales (including Japanese franchises) there is an awful long way to go.

The growing business in France was hit last year by disruption around Paris, but £26 million profit is not a lot out of £400 million sales.

But on the positive side, just think what M&S might do once it has established itself in Germany (beginning this autumn) and finally got things right in France and Spain. It's a long time since the group has had a year as good as this.

As for the future, it is hard to see how M&S could do much better than it is doing now.



When the boat comes in... the Solitaire is the largest ship ever to be towed up the Tyne

Consumer watchdog lukewarm on plans to stem flow of leaks

Ofwat is to reveal water companies' plans to tackle waste, writes Nicholas Bannister

THE WATER companies have told Ofwat, the industry regulator, that losses through leakage should be reduced by about 25 per cent over the 22 years to 2014-15 — a performance which the National Consumer Council yesterday described as very disappointing.

However, Linda Lennard, of the National Consumer Council, said: "Clearly leakage impacts on customers' bills and on the broader issue of conservation," she said. "Customers are being told to conserve water which they have paid for and this contrasts with the very poor performance in reducing leakage by the companies."

She said the intended reduction over the 22-year period was pretty modest given the scale of the losses and that there was a very strong case for having statutory leakage targets.

"Clearly leakage impacts on customers' bills and on the broader issue of conservation," she said. "Customers are being told to conserve water which they have paid for and this contrasts with the very poor performance in reducing leakage by the companies."

Mr Lang had to refer the bid plans under the Water Act which lays down that mergers between water companies each with assets of over £30 million have to be scrutinised by the MMC.

High spirits taxes leave industry suffering bad case of depression

Pauline Springgett

THE British spirits industry yesterday urged the Government to cut the tax on its drinks to avoid damage to exports, UK jobs and the balance of trade.

Representatives of the Scotch Whisky Association and the Gin and Vodka Association of Great Britain told a cross-party and industry meeting that the UK tax on spirits was far too high, despite the 4 per cent cut introduced in last year's Budget.

Hugh Morrison, director general of the Scotch Whisky Association, said the UK spirits industry was one of Britain's commercial success stories, with Scotch whisky earning more than £2.2 billion annually.

"Increased taxation is leading to decreased revenue for the Government," he said. Mr Morrison also stressed the importance of the export market — more than 85 per cent of Scotch whisky is sold to 200 countries — but the industry was faced with some 400 barriers to trade worldwide. These ranged, he said, from prohibition to heavy taxation.

Developer seeks cash for retail project

News in brief

CHELSEFIELD, the fast-growing property developer which recently unveiled plans for a retail complex at London's White City, yesterday announced a £102 million rights issue to help it finance the development. Chelsfield said investors representing 30 per cent of the shares being issued had agreed to take up only a proportion of their rights, and their shares would be placed with City institutions.

At the same time, Chelsfield announced that it was taking full control of Merry Hill, the West Midlands shopping centre in which it is already the major shareholder. For 100 million, News of the issue sent Chelsfield's shares down 5p to 248p, against the rights price of 220p. — Ian King

VOSPER Thornycroft is confident of winning "at least one" big warship order over the next twelve months to replace the loss of the £400 million Type 23 frigate, Royal Navy contract to the GEC-owned Yarrow on the Clyde shipbuilder in February.

The loss of the Type 23 contract led to the loss of 350 jobs at the Southampton yard, and cost the company £3.8 million in the year to end-March 1996. Pre-tax profits for the period rose by 10 per cent to £27.5 million — in line with City forecasts. The group does not expect to cut its workforce again this year. — Tony May

ENTERPRISE Inns, the fast-growing independent pub group which came to market last November, yesterday announced plans to buy John Labatt UK, the British pubs arm of the Canadian brewing group, which itself was last year taken over by Belgian brewer Interbrew. Enterprise, which will pay £61.5 million for the 413-strong pub chain, is part-funding the deal through a £9.5 million one-for-six rights issue. — Ian King

FOREIGN and Colonial yesterday announced plans to liquidate its £22 million High Income Investment Trust, arguing that the move would produce "the highest possible return of value" to shareholders, and offering to "roll over" the fund into another F&C investment trust. The company, which took over management of the fund in January 1991, said the decision was taken because the fund was "too small to have a viable life as a conventional investment trust". The news sent the fund's shares up 5 1/2p to 73p, against a net asset value of 73 1/2p at the end of last year. — Ian King

GERMAN airline Lufthansa yesterday launched a huge cost cutting programme designed to save DM1 billion by 2001, in spite of announcing higher profits for 1995. Chairman Jürgen Weber said the airline could not relax "because our main rivals in Europe have also declared war on costs." Suppliers are to be asked to review prices, while the company is to continue its move towards performance-related pay. — Keith Harper

BRITAIN'S three leading drinks companies, Grand Metropolitan, Allied Domecq and Guinness, have all suffered flat results recently.

11 per cent last year, while US sales fell by 9 per cent. However, sales of British spirits in eastern Europe, Latin America, China and India were all rising fast, often because UK brands were bought as "aspirational" drinks, according to Martin Riley, a brand manager at Allied Domecq.

Britain's three leading drinks companies, Grand Metropolitan, Allied Domecq and Guinness, have all suffered flat results recently.

Handwritten signature: John King

SOCCER: ENGLAND GET DOWN TO GRASS ROOTS IN BEIJING



Leap into the unknown... the England players get in some light training on the much-maligned Workers' Stadium turf yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: WILL BURGESS

Sod's Law to test Venables' defence

David Lacey finds injuries have queered the coach's pitch for tomorrow's match

OTHER reports of the wretched state of the pitch in the Workers' Stadium here, where England play China tomorrow, were grossly exaggerated or the Chinese have discovered the horticultural equivalent of a cure for baldness. Probably the truth lies somewhere in between.

Generally flat despite a few ruts, England have played on worse, most memorably the pitch in Limassol in 1975 when Don Revie's side met Cyprus in a European Championship qualifier.

Then, not only was the field bumpy and pock-marked but the metal heads of the sprinkler system were showing through. Yet England won 1-0 and nobody was damaged.

David Seaman, whose broken ankle in Beijing a year ago when he was playing for Arsenal largely inspired the present scare, still felt able to compare the offending pitch favourably with another Cypriot field. "The pitch that Arsenal played on in Nicosia was worse than this," the

goalkeeper said, "and nothing happened out there."

He thought the conditions in the Workers' Stadium were much as he remembered them. "It looks greener than a year ago," he said, "but it was a rut that caused my injury. The pitch is a little better, although it's still a bit bobbly. But I've played on far worse and nobody was hurt."

"We expected it to be a lot worse than it is," said David Platt, the England captain. "It's not ideal but it is not as bad as we were led to believe."

Venables, who flew out alone to Beijing to conduct his own private pitch inspection and then sent his assistant Ted Buxton to keep an eye on the repair work he had demanded, yesterday gave the pitch his qualified approval. "It's not ideal," he said, "but it's a lot better. There is grass

now in areas where there was none the first time I came over."

The eagerness of a Chinese team to put one over on the inventors of football may well present Venables with the greater problems, as England strive to keep a balance between natural pride and prudent self-preservation with the European Championship little more than a fortnight away.

Mark Wright having proved that footballers can injure themselves anywhere, by damaging knee ligaments early in Saturday's game against Hungary at Wembley, England are more likely to be in danger from Sod's Law than sods of dodgy turf.

Because of the time difference, Venables could not confirm Wright's withdrawal from Euro 96 until yesterday afternoon. The Liverpool de-

fender's absence has surely queered the coach's pitch where playing three at the back is concerned, although until Tony Adams and Steve Howey can prove their match fitness the situation in defence remains worryingly open. Yesterday the England coach made optimistic noises about Adams and Howey but he needs more practical evidence before he can start making decisions.

As to the team Venables will put out against China, his choice may well reflect any lingering doubts he has about the playing surface. Paul Gascoigne, who missed the Hungary game because he was playing for Rangers in the Scottish FA Cup final, is due to return but can Venables take such a risk with a notoriously accident-prone player? Or, if it comes to that, with Alan Shearer, who has

just had a hernia operation?

Whoever starts the game, Venables will probably make a liberal use of substitutes, running the rule over some of those who are on the fringes of his final 22. Jason Wilcox, Dennis Wise, Les Ferdinand and Robbie Fowler might willingly play on broken glass if they felt it would strengthen their chances.

Yesterday a cooling breeze offset temperatures in the eighties and when England face China tomorrow evening the principal heat will be generated by a crowd of around 65,000. Some English fans are expected but not in any great number.

Those who do turn up can make as much noise as they like, but will risk being ejected if they keep standing up, in the Workers' Stadium "all-seated" means exactly that.

European Cup final Juventus v Ajax Amsterdam

Ajax find friends but lose players

Martin Theopelis in Rome

PURISTS have pilloried English football this season for only providing excitement. So it will be interesting to see tonight if their preferred idols from the Continent can extend the class of '96.

The Eternal City put on its sunny face for the arrival of Ajax and Juventus, two of the eternally great names of European football. And Roma and Lazio fans were gripped by the importance of the game, to a man and woman supporting the Dutch against the defeated Turin rivals.

"They have done a lot of dirty things to us," sneered one Lazio fan.

A better pairing for the game to decide the best club side in Europe would have been Ajax versus Milan — who have recovered from last season's hiccup that culminated in spluttering defeat by the Dutch in last year's final — but the prospect of Ajax v Juventus is still rosy enough for 67,000 spectators in the Olympic Stadium and 500 million television viewers to be put on drooling alert.

Ajax offer adaptable players schooled in one another's positions; patient, mobile, comfortable on the ball, merrily in possession and suddenly explosive. Juventus provide more aggression, yet less adventure. Should they score first, watch them shut up shop and to hell with entertainment. As history shows, fielding lots of great performers never guaranteed a great performance. Especially with so much at stake.

We are not talking money here. Ajax are already guaranteed \$9 million in prize money and commercial spin-offs for reaching the final; Juventus \$2.5 million.

There is pride at stake. Ajax are about to bid farewell to two stars enticed by Milan's millions, Davids and Reiziger, so a second successive European Cup win would prove a point about what money cannot always buy. Juventus would like to win the huge jug-eared trophy properly, having previously done

so amid the carnage of Haysa Victory, would also provide their own two-fingered gesture to moneybags Milan.

One factor may even up Ajax's quality advantage: Louis van Gaal's purveyors of total football are in total confusion about who will play.

The young striker Patrick Kluyvert, scorer of the winner in last year's final, will start on the bench. Fit again after a knee injury, he has not played for three weeks and is also deemed to be still recovering from his brush with vehicular homicide.

The winger Overmars has a long-term knee injury, the defender Reiziger is suspended, and another key defender, Frank de Boer, is hoping to shake off an ankle injury. Two of those who would normally step up from the bench are ineligible, the defender Marcio Santos and the winger Hoekstra.

It leaves the captain, Danny Blind, worried. "When everyone is fit we can beat Juventus. I don't say it's impossible, but when you put in players who are not regulars the quality is less. You can know the system in your mind but you also have to do it with your legs."

It will test the new players' ability to slot into Ajax's fluid system, as legend says they are brought up to do. By not starting Kluyvert, Van Gaal is placing great faith in the replacement Kanu. Even the coach is not fully convinced. "We have trained very well to the capacity of this selection," he said, "but I don't know if they have enough to win."

Of course Juventus, fully fit themselves, are not complacent about their opponents' misfortunes. "It is not a pleasure to know they have players missing," said the coach, Marcello Lippi.

Despite a forward line — Vialli, Del Piero and Ravanelli — that ought to instil confidence to the contrary, Lippi does not expect many goals tonight.

Vialli preferred to remain on safer ground. When asked the same question, he replied with the only true answer: "I don't know." A fitting watchword for any preview to this most intriguing of games.

Everton and Villa in Speed chase

Ian Ross

EVERTON and Aston Villa will be the main rivals to sign the Leeds United midfielder Gary Speed when the bidding for him starts this morning.

The Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson is prepared to sell the Wales international to raise money for team rebuilding after a disappointing season.

However, despite Wilkinson's pressing need for money and Speed's desire to leave a club which he has served with distinction since he was a schoolboy, no offer of less than £3.75 million is likely to be acceptable to the Yorkshire club.

Everton's manager Joe Royle has long coveted Speed's skills and has made two unsuccessful attempts to lure him away from Elland Road in the past 12 months. And Royle's Villa counterpart Brian Little, another firm admirer, is keen to add Speed to the squad that beat Leeds in last season's Coca-Cola Cup final.

Ideally Royle would like to arrange an exchange deal for Speed, but if Wilkinson shows

no interest in any of the players who will be permitted to leave Goodison Park this summer then Everton will not hesitate to lodge a cash bid.

Speed is a lifelong Everton supporter and in his youth he delivered newspapers to the home in Wales of the Merseyside club's most successful captain, Kevin Ratcliffe.

If Wilkinson sells Speed, who has been unsettled for 18 months, he is expected to invest about £1.5 million in the Nottingham Forest goalkeeper Mark Crossley. This week Wilkinson signed Ian Rush on a free transfer from Liverpool.

Kenny Jackett has been appointed first-team manager at Watford. Graham Taylor, the club's general manager, recommended the appointment of Jackett, 34, who shared the coaching duties with Luther Blissett last season when the club were relegated to the Second Division.

Swansea have signed the fit zinzin Benfica defender Joao Moreira for an undisclosed five-figure fee. They have also appointed their former player Alan Curtis as first-team coach in succession to Jimmy Rimmer.

McAllister's national remedy

Patrick Glenn on the Scotland captain relieved to be away from Leeds' uncertainty

GARY McALLISTER'S spring of discontent is unlikely to be made glorious summer by any sun of York. Instead he hopes that his current discomfort at Elland Road will be eased during a few June days in Warwickshire and London.

The Leeds United and Scotland captain, who flew to New England yesterday with Craig Brown's Euro 96 squad, is so unsettled at the Yorkshire club that he admits to an uncertain future.

"I've been on a downer since the closing stages of the season," said McAllister, "because Leeds need sorting out, from the dressing room to the board room. I'd have to say I'm not settled. And I would like to see the sorting-out done sooner rather than later."

"I mean, at 31, a two- or three-year rebuilding programme is no good to me. I would like to see good signings made now so that the club can quickly regain the momentum and the standards they had when I signed from Leicester six years ago."

"The season just finished was a struggle from the start

and culminated in that awful Coca-Cola Cup final defeat by Villa. We were building up to that; the wheels had been set by then and you could see it coming."

McAllister regards the two-match tour of the United States, and the European Championship itself, as the best possible restorative. Even if there is widespread pessimism about Scotland's prospects in the matches at Villa Park and Wembley in the middle week of next month, he expects to emerge from the fray in better heart.

"Coming here to Connecticut to play the US and then down to Miami for the Colombia game, followed by Holland, England and Switzerland in the championship, could hardly be better," he said. "I will get me out of the way of all the uncertainty at Leeds."

"And I still feel that at international level I have to achieve a bit more on the great occasions. In the World Cup in Italy six years ago I was very much on the periphery and it felt like it. I didn't play in any of the games. In the 1992 European Champion-

ship in Sweden I played in all three but still felt slightly on the edge of things.

"Now I want to show what a man who has played 600 matches in major league football and captains his country can do. That will put a pressure of sorts on me, but I'm ready for that. Looking forward to it in fact."

McAllister's inner turmoil is hardly an encouraging portent for Scotland fans looking for reasons to be optimistic about next month's engagements. But he is convinced that the Scots' preparation for the European show is preferable to England's long haul to the Far East.



McAllister... club blues

Four charged over Euro 96 tickets

FOUR people have been charged with offences relating to the allocation of tickets for next month's European Championship, writes Mark Redding.

The three men and one woman will appear before London magistrates on June 10 charged on three counts of offering for sale "as unauthorised persons" tickets to Euro 96.

The charges come in the wake of arrests made on April 30 when 12 agencies and other businesses were raided by police investigating the alleged sale of unauthorised tickets.

Chelsea and Rangers must wait until Friday to find out whether they have succeeded in signing the shaven-headed Juventus striker Gianluca

Vialli. The agent for the Juve captain has promised "stunning news" when Vialli finally announces the name of the club where he will see out his career.

Parma, and Vialli's previous side Sampdoria — who made him briefly the world's most expensive player when they sold him for £12.5 million in 1992 — are also in the running for the 31-year-old's signature.

Bordeaux's place in the sun has clouded over with the predictable break-up of the side beaten in the UEFA Cup final by Bayern Munich. Their Euro 96 trio Zinedine Zidane, Christophe Dugarry and Bixente Lizarazu have all decided they want to leave.

"We made them interesting offers but we could not match

their demands," Bordeaux's president Alain Aillolou said. "We wanted to keep them but they didn't want to stay."

The coveted playmaker Zidane is negotiating with Juventus, and Dugarry is also being pursued by the European Cup finalists along with Arsenal, Blackburn, Napoli and Internazionale.

The Euro 96 organisers have dismissed reports that they snubbed the World Cup-winning Sir Alf Ramsey. The former England manager, now aged 76, will spend the duration of the championship at his daughter's home in the United States after claiming he was not invited to the tournament.

Yesterday Euro 96's media relations manager Alec McGilven responded by saying: "Sir

Alf Ramsey has been invited to both the opening match — England v Switzerland — and all other matches at Wembley as a VIP guest of the Football Association."

A later England manager, Bobby Robson, was greeted by a crowd of supporters at Barcelona airport when he arrived to sign the £2 million two-year deal he described as "too good to refuse."

Robson will stay in Spain for two weeks while he ponders the restructuring of what has for the past two seasons been a lacklustre side. "There will be reinforcements," he promised. Barca, who have already signed Laurent Blanc from Auxerre, are to dispense with Romania's Gheorghe Hagi and Croatia's Robert Prosinecki.

Sport in brief

Tennis

Pete Sampras lost to Bohdan Ulihrach on his return to competition in Dusseldorf yesterday. The world No. 1, playing for the first time since the death of his coach Tim Gullikson, was beaten 7-6, 2-6, 6-3, giving the Czech Republic an unassailable 2-0 lead over the United States in the ATP World Team Cup.

Gabriels Sabatini, who has a stomach-muscle problem, has withdrawn from next week's French Open, allowing the 15-year-old Martina Hingis to take the last seeded spot.

Badminton

England completed their disappointing Thomas Cup campaign in Hong Kong yesterday by losing 5-0 to Indonesia. Colin Haughton looked

their most likely scorer when he took the first game off Andy Wiranata, but he went down 12-15, 15-3, 15-6.

Indonesia finished top of Group A to earn a match with South Korea in Friday's semi-finals. Denmark, who beat Malaysia 4-1 to finish top of Group B, will play China.

Ice Hockey

Mario Lemieux took most of the second period off to be sick, then returned to set up Jaromir Jagr for a goal and score himself as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Florida Marlins 2-2 to level their Eastern Conference play-off final at one game each.

Golf

Lisa Dermott looked in good shape for her Curtis Cup debut next month when she beat the eight-times champion Ricki Thomas 4 and 3 at Tenby yesterday to retain the Welsh title.

Teamtalk For the latest Transfer News Call 0891 33 77+ Table with 4 columns of football clubs and their transfer activity.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.

Golf

David Davies at The Oxfordshire sees the Scot enjoy his biggest pay-day by winning two 18-hole matches in the world championship

Torrance bankrolls his own

AT THE age of 42 years and nine months Sam Torrance yesterday won the largest cheque of his life...

He now goes forward to the world finals, on January 4-5 in Scottsdale, Arizona...

Torrance beamed and smoking one of his roll-your-own cigarettes, and said: "Who wants a drink?"

"It was a great match," he said, emphasising the word match. "It's not about being six or seven under. It's about beating your opponent..."

Torrance will now play Scott Hoch, winner of the American regional final...



At a stroke... Sam Torrance plays to the 4th on his way to victory in the world championship European zone and £200,000

is Christmas and the New Year. But that has been put right and, attracted by the game's largest purse...

It still has to prove itself as an attraction, and attention here has been sparse...

the morning, some excellent golf, and the final was always tense. Torrance and Montgomerie were playing 18 holes for £100,000...

These past two days Torrance has been prone to outbursts of excellence. Against Mark James on Monday he had seven birdies in nine holes...

Montgomerie went birdie, par, par, which gave Torrance an edge he was not to lose, though he did try.

A drive into a bunker at the 10th was followed by a watery second, and at the 11th a simple four-iron second was badly pushed into the same lake...

said Torrance without modesty, and Montgomerie agreed that it was "the all-important hole".

Both men drove into sand at the next but Torrance holed from 10 feet to restore his three-hole margin. Eventually he was three up and three to play...

ulous recovery this time. He did win the 18th but he hit a poor drive at the 17th, off which he did well to clear the lake...

It was a financially famous victory for Torrance but the man who came second in last year's Volvo Order of Merit, to Montgomerie, confessed that he would trade this win for that title, one that has eluded him through all the years.

Rugby Union

Top Welsh clubs warned

THE 12 First Division clubs in Wales have been warned by their union that if they launch a breakaway they face being left isolated by their English counterparts.

The Welsh Rugby Union chairman Vernon Pugh, in a circular to all 220 member clubs this week, says he believes the Rugby Football Union and its leading clubs will soon settle their differences.

"Unless we are very much mistaken, the probability is that the RFU will seek to keep its clubs by offering them very significant sums of money," he said.

within Wales has never been greater.

Pugh, who is also chairman of the International Board, told the clubs that if England were not in the Five Nations next season it would not be because they had been expelled but because they had decided to go of their own volition.

"If, when the Five Nations committee has invited the tenders from broadcasters, the RFU are not prepared to participate with the other unions they will be choosing to leave the championship. It cannot be run on terms dictated by any one union.

"It is hoped that good sense and fairness will eventually prevail and that the championship can continue as before. The decision on that now rests with the RFU, and the Celtic countries will not tolerate being treated as second-class citizens."

England were surprised at the decision of the other unions to force a showdown next month, given that the current contract with the BBC has a

season to run. If England are removed from the championship, the other four countries will play one another on a home-and-away basis; France have been given permission to play England in a one-off match.

England would be hit through a loss of gate income and would be unable to negotiate a television deal if they arranged fixtures with the top southern hemisphere countries while the BBC contract was still running.

Swansea have signed the Newport wing Richard Rees and the former Llanelli and Wales back Luc Evans to follow last week's capture of the fly-half Arwel Thomas from Bristol. Their former scrum-half Robbie Jones may rejoin them from Bridgend, but Daniel Hawkins looks set to leave.

The Leicester scrum-half Kieran Rodden has pledged his future to the club by signing a three-year contract after turning down a move to an unnamed London team.

Basketball

Import quotas in limbo

THE Bundesliga League is in danger of embarking on a bloody-nosed rejection of raising defeat in its attempt to raise the number of foreign players its clubs are allowed to employ.

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Rugby League

Wales in Super League appeal

PAUL FITZPATRICK ENGLAND'S appointment of its youngest ever captain, 20-year-old Andy Farrell, for the European Championship is an indication of the confidence with which they can look to the future.

For Wales and France, who meet at Carcassonne on June 5, the outlook is less certain, and Wales's coach Clive Griffiths yesterday appealed to the Rugby Football League to "test-track" South Wales into next season's Super League.

Such a move, said Griffiths, would ensure the continuation of the national side, who have lost some outstanding talent since reaching the semi-finals of the Centenary World Cup last year.

Griffiths's plea may well receive a positive response. According to an RFL spokesman, clubs have been canvassed and there appears to be widespread support for a Super League side in South Wales. The earliest go-ahead, however, would be at the next council meeting in July.

Eleven players who were available to Griffiths last October are not now. Injury has played a disruptive part, and Davies, Griffiths, Hadley and Ford have returned to union and Quinnell is about to.

the current Super League season, although the national team captain refused to accept yesterday that the two European Championship matches would definitely be his last for the Wales league side.

Griffiths believes good players would be attracted to a top club in Cardiff but will not rush to join a South Wales side playing, as now, in the Second Division of the RFL.

France are experiencing similar problems, and two forwards who have helped get Paris St Germain up and running this season, Greg Kacala and Darren Adams, are going back to rugby union.

Meanwhile Farrell was viewing his appointment as England captain as a possible stepping-stone to the captaincy of Great Britain. Wigan back-row forward, 21 next week, was the youngest forward to appear for Great Britain when he played against New Zealand in 1993.

His appointment denied that would challenge the overseas quota regulations by fielding six foreign players. The club have five non-British players on their books and are reported to be about to sign a sixth, Glenn Liddiard, from South Queensland Crushers, but their chief executive Stephen Ball said yesterday: "We will abide by the RFL's ruling on any specific player."

Cricket

Tour match: Northamptonshire v Indians

Loye makes capital out of low tourist rate

THE Indian team came to the testy suburbs yesterday seeking a bit of vocal support and a last workout before the summer's business begins in earnest at The Oval tomorrow in the first one-day international.

As at Lord's on Sunday, however, their preparations were thwarted, not by the weather this time, despite a blustery shower 15 overs into the second innings which reduced the match by eight overs, but by a confident Northamptonshire who batted themselves out of early trouble to win comfortably on faster scoring rates.

With a revised target of 192 from 42 overs it was a slick effort by the county, based on a four-wicket stand of 93 in 24 overs between Rob Bailey and Mal Loye after the wicket-keeper and batsman, Richard Montgomerie and Tim Walton had fallen inside 10 overs to Venkatesh Prasad and Paras Mhambrey, two who may join Srinath tomorrow to form a pace trio.

Bailey appeared unlucky to be run out for 41 but Loye went on to hit nine vigorous fours in making 83 from 55 balls, his highest score in any competition this season, before he hit Anil Kumble, a team-mate last season, to mid-wicket. By that time, however, only 13 runs were needed from 16 deliveries, and there were seven balls and five wickets in hand when Kevin Curran pulled Sachin Tendulkar for the winning run.

He did win the 18th but he hit a poor drive at the 17th, off which he did well to clear the lake alone get close to the green; and when he missed his birdie putt from 10 feet he shook hands.

It was a financially famous victory for Torrance but the man who came second in last year's Volvo Order of Merit, to Montgomerie, confessed that he would trade this win for that title, one that has eluded him through all the years.

Down Park provided the sort of conditions the Indian batsmen are likely to meet tomorrow. This is the notorious strip that saw 30 wickets fall on the opening day of Northamptonshire's championship last season, to Essex last year. Although the ball yesterday did not perform aerobically as it did then, the surface was certainly livelier than business in the Allan Lamb Memorial Merchandising Unit — the description

the public address announcer gave to a display of testimonial clobber in the back of an estate car.

One more the Indians relied on a major contribution from Tendulkar, who, as is customary in one-day games, opened the batting and made a cultured 88 from 108 deliveries before he was run out from midwicket while answering Sanjay Manjrekar's call for a quick single.

With the exception of Manjrekar, who made 37, and Mohammed Azharuddin, 26, the batting looked pedestrian in the face of some spiky Northamptonshire seam bowling which was particularly restrictive at the start of the innings.

Azharuddin's innings ended when he edged the medium-pace Tony Penberthy to Russell Warren behind the stumps. It was the last contribution of the day from the India captain, who had been struck severely and the right hand by Penberthy. A fracture is not suspected — no X-ray was sought — but the treatment left his right knuckle scraped and sore and a further examination is planned this morning.

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Rugby League

Test to be played on the pitch next door

WARWICKSHIRE were yesterday given the go-ahead to stage next month's first Test with India on a strip adjacent to the usual Edgbaston wicket.

Problems with uneven grass growth on the regular Test pitch had prompted yesterday's visit of the Test and County Cricket Board pitches consultant Harry Brind.

Dennis Amis, Warwickshire's chief executive, said: "We always cut two wickets in advance of a Test, but there was not enough grass growing on our first-choice one until August."

But, with all the cold weather, everyone has been having the same problems — and we were heartened to hear confirmation of that from Harry."

Amis said that Brind had examined the alternative pitch and was "very satisfied" with its more evenly grassed appearance. "Harry will come here another couple of times before the Test [starting June 6] to make sure all is going well — but we have always had good cricket on this strip in previous seasons," he added.

Hockey

Cardwell gives Atkins's team stick for not getting stuck in

"WE'RE not tough enough" was the manager Jenny Cardwell's scathing criticism of Great Britain after they went down 2-1 to a controversial late goal against Argentina, in the first of two internationals on successive days against the World Cup silver medalists at Lillehall.

"We frequently had the ball and lost it and we let them drive through our tackles," said Cardwell. "But that was not the only reason we lost. Our attack rarely made the final pass count."

In fact both teams seemed to be going through the motions in Atlanta, probably in a crucial round-robin match. Besides, no one wants to get injured now and Britain could not afford any more casualties. Tammy Miller, Karen Brown and Anna Bennett could not play and Britain had to call up replacements, two of whom, Culliford and Merrett, played spiritedly.

Hockey

Edwards takes ban to BOA

DUNCAN MACKAY technical infringements — was passed on to the International Amateur Athletic Federation for consideration 10 days ago by the British Athletic Federation. But he claims that by the time the IAAF hears the case it will be too late.

If this appeal to the BOA fails, the next step is likely to be the law courts. "If there is anything called justice we will succeed," said his solicitor.

If Edwards is allowed to compete without the IAAF's permission it could throw the trials for Atlanta in Birmingham next month.

His appeal for reinstatement under the "exceptional circumstances" rule — he says the tests were marred by

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SportsGuardian

Twickenham calls emergency meeting to head off breakaway by top clubs

Rugby hits the panic button

Robert Armstrong

ENGLISH rugby plunged into a fresh self-destructive crisis last night that could shortly result in the leading 20 clubs forming themselves into an alternative union. In a last-ditch attempt to forestall an irrevocable split, the president of the Rugby Football Union, Bill Bishop, has taken the rare step of calling an emergency meeting of the full 63-man committee for Friday.

Bishop, who acted as honest broker at last week's abortive talks between the clubs and Twickenham in London, fears that his one-year term of office may be remembered ultimately for the disintegration of the union, which could take place before he steps down on July 12.

The top clubs, under the chairmanship of Donald Kerr of Harlequins, have drawn up plans to develop their own competitions and television contracts at home and in Europe because they believe they are being forced out of the union.

Two major obstacles are preventing a possible settlement. By far the bigger is the negative negotiating style of Cliff Brittle, the chairman of the RFU executive committee, who has comprehensively failed in his brief to bring some order to the union's affairs. Brittle has also dropped the widely respected RFU secretary Tony Hallett from his negotiating team, apparently because Hallett gets on with the clubs.

Another big stumbling-block has been the refusal of powerful grass-roots elements such as the counties, junior clubs and the services to back the top clubs' demand for a professional, properly funded infrastructure in the new open era ushered in by the International Board. The traditionalists, who largely support Brittle, have conducted a fiercely fought rearguard action on the full committee, including a whispering campaign against the progressive-minded Hallett.

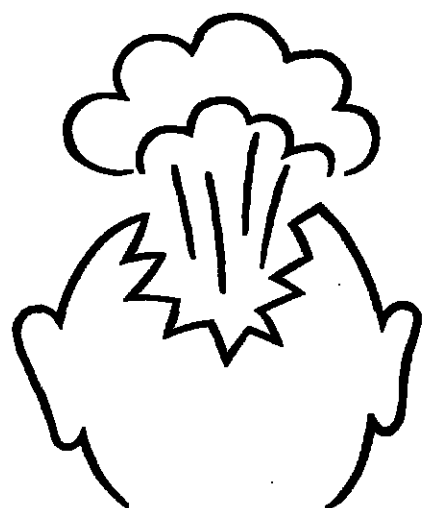
The English Professional Rugby Union Clubs, as the elite clubs are now called, have told Bishop they have come to the end of negotiations with Brittle and will recommend to their member clubs a breakaway from the union forthwith. The clubs believe Brittle is playing a delaying game until his ally, the president-elect John Richardson, replaces Bishop in just over seven weeks.

Bishop said yesterday: "I spoke to the officers of the union and took the decision only last night to have a full meeting on Friday. All the members of the Rugby Union should hear all the facts and come to a decision. If anything did go badly wrong, I might not be forgiven if I had not given people the opportunity to have their say."

At the core of the dispute, which has gone on for five months, is the structure of competitive rugby in England next season, together with the distribution of television income and whether the players are contracted to Twickenham or their clubs. On each issue the clubs complain Brittle has rejected the conclusions of joint negotiating sub-committees that include his own representatives.

Kerr, who last month warned that the clubs would boycott the Courage leagues and Pilkington Cup next season, will probably explain Epru's demands at Friday's meeting. He said: "Negotiations have dragged on and on and we feel we have to bring matters to a conclusion. We need to know where we stand for next season. There is no threat but we feel that Cliff Brittle is determined to force us to leave the union."

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STORM CLOUDS GATHER OVER ENGLAND WARM-UP



Catch it if you can... England practise at The Oval before tomorrow's one-day international against India

Illingworth defends book as Lord's prepares to act

Paul Weaver on an untimely publication reviving the Devon Malcolm controversy

RAY ILLINGWORTH faces the prospect of disciplinary action over his book, One Man Committee, which will be published next month but is being serialised in a national newspaper this week.

Whether the punishment will be administered by a man with a black cloth over his head or come in the form of a gentle knuckle-rap was unclear last night, what is obvious is that the chairman of the England selectors has upset a number of people in the game. Again, the Test and County Cricket Board, just over the river at Lord's. For the many people who are drawn to the compelling soap opera of English cricket, this was a vintage episode.

The first extract from the book was published yesterday and in it Illingworth repeated and clarified his criticism of the fast bowler Devon Malcolm, whom he largely blames for England losing last winter's Test series in South Africa.

Reg Taylor, general manager of Malcolm's club Derbyshire, complained to Lord's, and Gerard Elias, chairman of the CCC's disciplinary committee, warned that action might be taken.

The board spokesman Richard Little said last night: "He

[Elias] has to make a decision if there is a case to be answered. If there is, a summary panel will be formed to decide what should be done."

Unlike players and umpires, Illingworth, who retires at the end of the season, is not required to submit books or articles to Lord's for approval. But he can be disciplined if he has written anything judged to be derogatory or which discloses confidences.

Illingworth, speaking from his Yorkshire bunker yesterday, said: "It's now a matter for the disciplinary committee chairman. If he thinks I've got something to answer, I'm prepared to answer it. All I'll ask is let them read the book properly."



What a racket... England's coach Lloyd looks to tennis

"I don't think I've slagged anyone off or been unfair to anyone. Anybody who reads the book will see that. All I've done is use my right of reply to Devon, and I've not had the chance to do that until now."

This was not good enough for Taylor, who said: "We are very disappointed that Ray Illingworth has again publicly criticised Devon Malcolm, and Lord's have said they will look at it seriously."

"Devon is still picking himself off the ground after what happened in the winter and now here we are again knocking his feet from under him. It is up to the board whether he can do the job, and I would be surprised if other counties don't feel the same."

In South Africa Illingworth despaired of Malcolm and even claimed he "did not have a cricket brain". Perhaps he recognised a man as stubborn as himself but the criticism was valid.

When Malcolm returned to England he attacked Illingworth in an article in the same paper the chairman's tone is now appearing in. He was reprimanded but not fined.

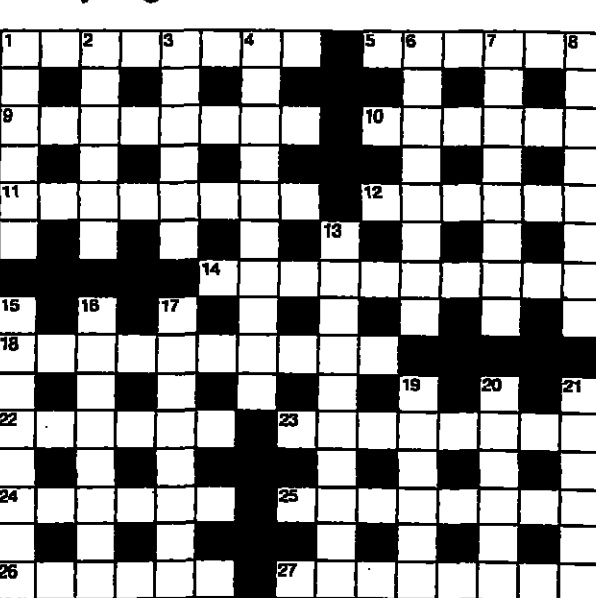
Illingworth's observations are usually spoken in blunt, it is the disruptive nature of his timing which has really upset people. The international season starts tomorrow.

"The timing, though, was not Illingworth's choice but the publisher's. It is also the nature of these serialisations that they decline into observations on fielding circles and the evolution of the law law. Strong disciplinary action against Illingworth would be more disruptive than the book itself, and in view of the imminence of the chairman's departure the board may decide to fudge the issue, a

course of action in which it is supremely qualified. My will just sell a few more books. At The Oval, meanwhile, it looked as though we had David Lloyd, the captain of Britain's Davis Cup team, and not the former Lancashire cricket coach. The players practised catching with tennis balls. Graeme Hick earning £60 after beating Matthew Maynard in the final.

Guardian Crossword No 20,659

Set by Logodaedalus



Across

1,27 In the final reckoning, when shall we have our coos? (2,3,3,2,3,3)

5 Pitched a musical work into an American toboggan (6)

9 Painting by Turner? Better seen in comfort after a second (8)

10 Sulphur stuck to my ear inside showing dry marks (6)

11,23 A chap lunched free? Not quiet! And not of the highest standard (5,3,8)

12 Being skilful, a doctor takes nothing with it (6)

14 The appeal of a dry allotment with carbon buried in it (10)

16 Service comes first here, so Uncle B. Isn't to be disturbed (6,4)

22 Football match — reminder to swallow pint — one (3-3)



Vincent Hanna

THE fax arrived on Saturday morning. It was incomprehensible. I would have paid more attention to it had it not been for the Reigate Conservative Association. They were nasty to their MP Sir George Gardner, who threatened a by-election. I had to think politics instead of England v Hungary, and I forgot about the fax.

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I am torn about it. I recognise that for normal people there will be no respite from wall-to-wall sport. On the other hand I will enjoy a golden summer of self-indulgence — in my shed.

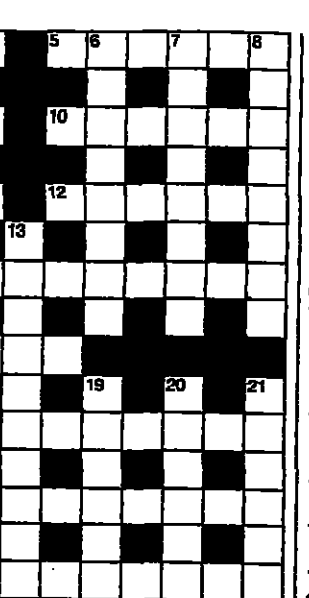
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Actually the BBC is as much a prisoner as I am. It must bid vast sums for major sporting events, and promise extensive coverage, or it may lose the chance next time. Airtime is important to the sports authorities because they can sell both advertising space and sponsorship. Thus we have just seen an FA Cup final where the BBC paid to advertise Littlewoods Pools.

None of this makes financial sense and it won't until the multi-channel opportunities of digital television arrive, and the BBC can compete with Sky's dedicated chan-

Guardian Crossword No 20,659

Set by Logodaedalus



Across

1,27 In the final reckoning, when shall we have our coos? (2,3,3,2,3,3)

5 Pitched a musical work into an American toboggan (6)

9 Painting by Turner? Better seen in comfort after a second (8)

10 Sulphur stuck to my ear inside showing dry marks (6)

11,23 A chap lunched free? Not quiet! And not of the highest standard (5,3,8)

12 Being skilful, a doctor takes nothing with it (6)

14 The appeal of a dry allotment with carbon buried in it (10)

16 Service comes first here, so Uncle B. Isn't to be disturbed (6,4)

22 Football match — reminder to swallow pint — one (3-3)

Down

1 Where Strasbourg is left pursuing a doubtful case? (6)

2 Collection raised when bad actor is submerged in river (6)

3 Run away from Francesca Pellegrini (6)

4 Running level in Texas, thus breaking unkind pact (3,3,4)

6 Weak person has chance to imprison American editor (4,4)

7 Up about one — not a record of a philosopher (6)

8 New Tory dens built without mortar (3-5)

Down

13 Bachelor, hooligan, dandy rescued together (7,3)

15 Family, having half a potato, would help to make soup (5-3)

16 I'm angry, revealing where rice is grown (2,1,5)

17 I would put up with a beauty class (6)

19 Separate act he'd rewritten (6)

20 Bear the expense of a female president (6)

21 Disney dwarf pulls up first of yellow skins (6)

Solution tomorrow

23 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 238 238. Calls cost 35p per min. cheap rate, 45p per min. at other times. Service supplied by ATS

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The Best of a bad job on screen



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nels. By the way, I'm told that buying and selling facilities within the BBC's internal market can make sports coverage seem economic. Now, where was I? "Heavenly bread!" said Emily over Sunday lunch. "Yes, it is Ulster soda far!" I explained.

"Stupid person," she snapped. "I mean Paris Angélica, the hyun by César Franck, that's what he's on about." She waved Quentin's fax at me. "We have to bet on someone called Panis — and on an angelic Celt." "Well, there is a grand prix driver called Panis," I said, "but he's never won anything." "There was a long silence, followed by a stamped to the television. He couldn't have — could he? Unbelievably Olivier Panis won the Monaco Grand Prix. There were 20 starters and three finishers. It was either the most technically incompetent race ever staged, or it was Quentin's masterpiece. I thought I caught a glimpse of him on the balcony of an apartment overlooking the circuit, but I wasn't sure.

Now it's all over the papers that Panis is a fine driver and the Ligier's Honda engine is formidable. But as Dorothy Parker said when Calvin Coolidge died: "How can they tell?" By the way, the angelic Celt won the Eurovision Song Contest for Ireland at 5-1, and I should have made a fortune.

THE third leg of the bet was to pick George Best's all-time favourite goal. It was No. 4, against Chelsea, and part of BBC's tribute to our hero at 50, to which we were all glued. I found it a mixed bag, with two well-crafted documentaries and that great 5-1 defeat of Benfica. George's draft Fantasy XI demonstrated why he was never a manager, and Parky's awful interview left me depressed.

There sat the finest footballer I — or anyone else — have ever seen, but who, in almost everything else he did, was a prize dickhead. Fortunately, for most of us, George is frozen in time, somewhere about 1965. On Sunday he looked awful. He found it difficult, he said, to think of himself as an alcoholic now, because he didn't have a drink every day. Maybe it hasn't all gone, he mused, because he had a lovely 34-year-old woman to share his life.

And we heard yet another rendition of that story about miss world in a negligee, £25,000 in used notes, a bottle of Dom Perignon, and a waiter who asks: "George, where did it all go wrong?"

You know what the really sad part is? George still doesn't get it.

Image? Not good, conceded close-cropped Steve, who guards the doors at Manchester's glitziest. "No longer the big, bald, fat guy," said the slim twenty-something. "You've got to talk to people, be polite. Bouncing conveys the wrong image. We're not all bad, you know. We want people to have a good time."

Inside Story 27 page 4

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.